The Ethical Implications in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel

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by

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An Abstract of

THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE
PHILOSOPHY OF GABRIEL MARCEL

Part One: The first part of this thesis aims at a broad, but critical, explication of the significant strands in Marcel's philosophy. Programmatically, it may be viewed as the groundwork which forms the basis for the specifically ethical reflections in the remainder of the thesis. Structurally, however, it may not be separated from the rest of the material, since a correct understanding of Marcel's career involves us in a perspective which places the moral consciousness very close to the heart of his search for philosophical truth.

Chapter one aims to show that Marcel's personal type of philosophy restricts us from making artificial separation between method and result. An examination of certain "structural metaphors" illustrates this "integral philosophy". There follows a detailed study of the attacks made upon Marcel's lack of system, and closed by a cautious defense of Marcel's refusal to systematise.

Chapter two, in its reference to philosophical language, follows logically on from the study of method.

It sympathetically presents Marcel as a student of words, whose work, as Walker Percy and Willem Zuurdeeg have suggested, may not be so inimical to current British philosophy as is usually believed.

Chapter three propels us into the midst of the most widely known concept in Marcel's repertory: the distinction between "problem" and "mystery". By Marcel's definition, a mystery is a problem which tends to swallow-up the person who poses the question. Attention is given to distinguishing Marcel's quite technical idea of mystery from its more common connotations, especially the religious ones. The point is made that mystery appears for Marcel at the point of moral dilemma.

Chapter four discusses the notion of "secondary reflection". The substance of these pages is to point out the inseparability between the knowing and the being of mystery. Secondary reflection is the process of reintegration of experience which we have analysed. There are extremely important ethical echoes which result from our refusal or acceptance of this way of living/thinking in this world.

Chapter five comes to terms with Marcel's non-materialist meaning of the statement, "I am my body." It becomes clear that the nonspatial relation I have to my body is, in Marcel's conception, the "existential fulcrum"

by which I may move the whole philosophical world.

Chapter six details Marcel's attempt to explode the myth of the abstract, conceptualised self. In rejoinder, he develops the notion of a self which "is" more or less, in dependence on the response of the person to the world and to others.

Chapter seven is a sort of fulcrum for part one. It integrates the previous and future material, i.e. shows how my body as the prime example of "mystery" apprehended in reflective thought provides a basis for approaching the world in which I live and the persons who inhabit it with me. This chapter includes an examination of our "être au monde" in terms of a participation which tends to overcome the sense of alienation by a "felt quality of identity" sensed to a profound degree. In other words, participation is a creative influence which yields up a sense of belonging.

Chapter eight elaborates Marcel's original reflections on the "I-thou" relation, for which Martin Buber has become justly famous. Central to Marcel's preoccupation is the experience of "presence" which, when it occurs, overcomes the isolation of the "I" and "the other". We refer to this as mutuality.

Part Two: Section One deals with the more intimate areas of moral life. Section Two deals with the more public areas of moral life and thought. A crucial weakness in Marcel's corpus is the lack of emphasis on testimony in the public arena in comparison with his fruitful reflections on fidelity in the private situation. It is our effort, however, to show that Marcel's approach has applicability in all areas of life. It should be noted that this most important part of the thesis does not paint Marcel primarily as an ethicist, but rather as a metaphysician whose thought has obvious and secret implications for ethics.

Chapter nine describes the fundamental basis for Marcel's ethics, the distinction between "having" and "being". This distinction is a particular aspect of the problem-mystery distinction, with peculiar significance for ethics. Marcel has recognised the significance of this for ethics, but this chapter seeks to fill out this notion. A type of ethical criterion appears: Does this attitude/act move me in the direction of the transformation of having into being? In other words, ethical life is a risky journey towards fulfillment recognised in terms of a participation which is creative rather than grasping.

Chapter ten represents a denial that "moral rules" are capable of coping with the freedom and uncertainty involved in moral decision. The chapter is not an assault on rules *per se*, but rather an effort to show, in Marcel's terms, that rules in this area are, at best, an approximation of real moral life and, at worst, a positive denial of the responsibility we must learn to bear--hopefully together.

Chapter eleven embodies a chronological examination and moderate critique of the primary notion in Marcel's ethics, "creative fidelity," which I have called "recreative fidelity". The application of this notion to family life is given special attention commensurate with Marcel's own usage. Fidelity appears as a "recreation of being".

Chapter twelve relates the way in which Marcel has related modern man and his technological development to the experience of alienation. Remedy is suggested in terms of being as distinguished from having. Certain differences in interpretation from the Marcel student, Kenneth Gallagher, are stated.

Chapter thirteen explores the moral distinction to be discovered between suicide and martyrdom and moves ethics to the brink of religious language with a description of the difference--a hope that transcends the empirical world.

Part Three: This part attempts to put Marcel and Sartre in contemporary perspective by comparison with his younger compatriot, the existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre. Marcel's own jousts with Sartre make this a significant insight into the thought of both men. This part represent a critical attempt to measure the force of Marcel's achievement in the face of radical ethical proposals which attempt to close themselves to the light of Christian tradition. It is hoped that the comparison of these thinkers, seldom done before, will be a contribution to the contemporary discussion of ethics.

Chapter fourteen takes up the perennial problem of freedom. The consequences of whether one sees freedom as a condemnation or a gift are delineated. The consequences are seen against the backdrop of individual psychology, the possibility of interhuman encounter, and the way the world we inhabit is understood,

Chapter fifteen examines the nature of values. A radical distinction is made between an arbitrary choosing of values, as Sartre seems to advocate, and a recreation of values, in Marcel's perspective. What appears is a search for love and truth which have an intensive, rather than an extensive, universability.

A Prayer

Forasmuch as Thou didst give Jesus Christ our Lord;
Who, when He ascended on high
led captivity captive
and gave gifts unto men:
Grant that we may here offer ourselves
Our life and work to Thee, O Lord,
And in that offering receive a new beginning,
And a new birth of the freedom
wherewith Christ has set us free. Amen

By Charles R. Stinnette, Jr.

A Theme

For in the final analysis our task is nothing less than the perceiving in what fashion life can be organically linked with the truth.

Gabriel Marcel

A Dedication

To my father and mother, The Reverend and Mrs. Charles W. Bowman, and to my wife, Dianne.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This customary location affords the place to express my appreciation to those who have made this study possible.

My sincere thanks are due to my supervisor, the Reverend Professor Ian Henderson, D.D., Professor of Systematic Theology, for guidance, personal and professional, and for considerable encouragement in the pursuance of my course of study. A number of his many valuable suggestions are explicitly or otherwise incorporated into the body of this work.

I owe a past debt of gratitude to numerous others, several of whom I would mention here: To Dr. J. Kenneth Grider, Ph.D., who first guided me to this University; to Dr. Delbert R. Gish, Ph.D., who's personal interest has been a source of perpetual encouragement; to Dr. Willard H. Taylor, Ph.D., my sponsor during theological school training; to Dr. Carl Bangs, Ph.D., whose teaching accomplished a radical revision of my thinking at an early stage.

I would express my debt of thanks to those connected to the University: To the Senatus Academicus and the Faculty of Divinity for accepting me as a research student for the Ph.D. degree and to the Reverend Professor William Barclay, D.D., Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, the Reverend Professor R. Gregor Smith, D.D., Primarius Professor of Divinity, the Reverend Dr. Allan Galloway, Senior Lecturer in Systematic Theology, each of whom has shown me specific considerations.

A number of people have assisted my study in Glasgow in various ways: My thanks are due to the staff of the University library, especially those who work in the Inter-Library Loan Department. I should like to record my thanks to Mrs. May Usher, Secretary to the Faculty of Divinity, whose assistance has always been beyond the call of duty.

To my wife, Dianne, for the arduous labour involved in typing this thesis, I must reserve my profoundest thanks.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Nearly all the major works, and many of the minor texts, from Marcel's repertory, have been translated into English from the French. Only the major texts are listed below, since they constitute the primary sources.

We have made use of the abbreviations listed below, when making reference to Marcel's major works in footnotes in the text. They are listed in the chronological order of their origin from Marcel's pen, though not necessarily in the order of their translation.

It is believed that one of the valuable aspects of this study is the substantial bibliography on Marcel in English, collected at the end of this volume. Fuller bibliographical information may be found at the end of this thesis.

The volumes, Royce's Metaphysics and Searchings reached me too late in the course of research to incorporate them into this study.

PF	=	Philosophical Fragments 1909-1914 and The Philosopher of Peace
MJ	=	Metaphysical Journal
BH	=	Being and Having
PE	=	The Philosophy of Existence
CF	=	Creative Fidelity
HV	=	Homo Viator
MBI	=	The Mystery of Being, Volume I: Reflection and Mystery
MBII	=	The Mystery of Being, Volume II: Faith and Reality
MAH	=	Men Against Humanity
DW	=	The Decline of Wisdom
PM	=	Problematic Man

PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to delineate the broader philosophical reflections of M. Gabriel Marcel and to indicate the explicit and implicit value they have for the problems of moral decision-making on a personal and social level.

The decision to study the thought of M. Marcel was taken early in the course of my research. I have not regretted that decision. Though I am not altogether uncritical of Marcel's work, as the thesis will indicate, the attraction of Marcel's thought has not diminished with the onset of greater understanding. To the contrary, the profundity of Marcel's work has gained a strong hold on my whole thought. Yet I am sure M. Marcel, himself, would agree that his work must not be regarded as an end-in-itself, but, rather, as a step towards truth.

The study is divided into three parts. The first part examines the significant strands of Marcel's philosophy. The second part, divided into two sections, represents a critical attempt to draw out the personal and social ethic implications grounded in the broader philosophical material. In the third part, there is an attempt to place Marcel in contemporary perspective through comparison to the most famous existentialist of our times, Marcel's compatriot, Jean-Paul Sartre.

Two singularities may be claimed for this thesis. First, to my knowledge this is the only study of the ethical implications of Marcel's thought to be done in English, though numerous studies have been carried out on other aspects of Marcel's work. Second, the bibliography of Marcel's works and texts related to his efforts, is certainly the most exhaustive I have seen in English, though I would not claim that it is the most extensive yet compiled. It is the hope of this writer that both of these aspects of this thesis will contribute in a small way to the advance of the effort to relate truth to life in our times.

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PART ONE

THE PHILOSOPHY OF INCARNATE BEING

"Reality itself is a system--for God; but it cannot be a system for an existing spirit."

Søren Kierkegaard

CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

A. Preliminary Remarks

Gabriel Marcel has consistently refused to allow his thought to be abstracted from his own experience. In this sense, at least, he may be referred to as an "existential philosopher." His thought may be called "la pensée pensante" rather than "la pensée pensée."

Marcel's experience leads him to follow out a concrete type of philosophical research leading to open-ended essays with nonsystematic conclusions. He holds a conscious conviction that there is a unity here which can only be demolished by a more or less deliberate attempt to get a strangle hold on one aspect or another of experience at the expense of the Gestalt. He believes it is the natural tendency of thought to abstract from the concrete elements of our experience to the detriment of the consequent conclusions.[1] It is this danger his non-system seeks to avoid.

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[1] Marcel disagreed with Jacques Maritain at one point where Maritain insisted that the natural tendency of thought is to get "bogged down" in the concrete existence to the detriment of rationality. He believes the tendency to be exactly the opposite.

B. Marcel's Personal Experience

We should take our "point of reference" from "experience itself", says Marcel, "treated as a massive presence which is to be the basis of all our affirmation."[2] This "massive presence of experience" is not to be understood as a mere idea or as an entity which may be factored down to the lowest common denominator by taking an economical, a biological, a psychological or sociological view as the single criterion for analysis. Rather it is the noncontingent basis of all our knowledge; it is that primitive unity with the whole of the world which is "mine".

It is clear that certain events in Marcel's life have influenced his thought considerably. The death of his mother when he was four years of age ranks as the first element. Marcel says: "I have few visual memories of her; but she has remained present and mysteriously with me throughout my life."[3] The second element is Marcel's aunt, "dominating, self-assertive and convinced that it was her duty to shed light into the inmost crevices of my mind."[4] Marcel believes his aunt's generally wholesome, but omnipresent, influence was as a polarity of the seen with his equally present, though unseen, mother. This duality played a major role in the development of Marcel's thought.[5] The first World War came as a shock to Marcel and clearly moved his

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[2] MBII, p.53.

[3] PE, p.83.

[4] PE, p.83. Marcel regarded his aunt as a "second mother" however; c.f. "The Finality of the Drama," The New Orpheus, Nathan A. Scott, ed., (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), p.333.

[5] PE, p.84.

thought toward the existential; up to that time his reflections had been quite abstract and controlled by idealism. He asks of this event:

> If the war had not come along to overthrow the world which still held me prisoner, how long would I have continued to mark time in this way?[6]

The conversion of this secular philosopher to the Roman Catholic Church on the 23rd of March, 1929, at thirty-nine years of age, must be regarded as an influential event, also. Probably it is not as creative an influence on his thought as James Collins thinks, when he states that this experience enabled Marcel to harmonise his philosophical and dramatic endeavor or that the "anteriority of concrete action over philosophical reflection prevailed until Marcel's conversion."[7] I think that a study of Marcel's dramatic work would not support Collins' claim that there is a Christian and a pre-Christian view of the theatre in Marcel, though it may be that this event caused him to see tragedy in a new light.[8] Yet there can be no doubt whatsoever that to a man whose thought and life are so closely interwoven, baptism into Catholicism becomes a significant factor. I would suggest that Collins is closer to the truth, then, when he indicates a "reciprocal influence" between Marcel's philosophy and his religious faith.[9] That, I think, is a rather exact

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[6] PF, p.24.

[7] "Gabriel Marcel and the Mystery of Being," Thought, Vol.XVIII (1943), pp.668-69.

[8] Ibid., p.670n.

[9] That later assessment to be found in BH, "Introduction" to Torchbook edition. M. Jarrett-Kerr agrees that Marcel does not solve the problems depicted in his plays with a "flourish of religion"; c.f. "Marcel's Theatre," The Dublin Review, Vol.222, (Spring, 1949), pp.43-44.

approximation.

It seems clear, therefore, that Marcel has experienced certain things which have blocked his path into esoteric speculation. There is significance that Marcel has deliberately circumvented the possible introversion of professional academic life. The integrity which comes across to Marcel's readers is linked to this relationship with his own experience, which he has sought to understand. Étienne Gilson has written that Marcel has "written nothing that is not taken from his own depths or experienced in direct contact."[10]

C. Integral Philosophic Research

In a searching autobiographical statement, Marcel rendered this judgement:

> My effort can be best described as an attempt to establish a concept which precludes all equation of being with Ding while upholding the ontological without going back to the category of substance which I regarded with profound mistrust.[11]

Marcel continues, more to our immediate point:

> Perhaps I can best explain my continual and central metaphysical preoccupation by saying that my aim was to discover how a subject, in his actual capacity as subject, is related to a reality which cannot in this context be regarded as objective, yet which is persistently required and recognized as real.[12]

Taken at its face value, this definition of the philosophical project places it in a nonscientific category. This is exactly where Marcel intends to place it. In his

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[10] Robert Markus, "The Metsphysics of Love," The Tablet, (May 20, 1950), p.402, quoted from unknown source.

[11] PE, p.95.

[12] PE, p.95.

Gifford Lectures he differentiated between "scientific" and "existential philosophy".[13] The research of the laboratory is repeatable, while existential philosophy, always in danger from the "eloquent amateur," is that which "cannot be renewed at will". Similarly, Marcel sees scientific ability as a mastery which one may acquire, while "the greatness of philosophy . . . is just this impossibility of regarding it as a discipline which can be acquired." We might add to this differentiation the idea that science is the process of establishing certain hypotheses which then become the goals of the labour of testing and evaluation. Marcel's philosophy, however, is not a goal-oriented process. David E. Roberts is correct when he says that "one constantly has the impression that he is pursuing his reflections wherever they may lead, without worrying about the orthodoxy of the outcome."[14]

Marcel has suggested some metaphors which picture this kind of research. The most frequently used symbol is that of a "winding path". Marcel's commentator, Kenneth Gallagher, discusses in detail the significance of this oft used metaphor. Asserting that the image is one that intuitively fits before we know exactly why, Gallagher rightly shows that this image applies, not simply to the informal nature of Marcel's works, but more directly to the "inner meaning of this thought". The form of the "winding path"

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[13] MBI, p.212-13.

[14] Existentialism and Religious Belief (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p.281. To the contrary, Guido de Ruggerio in Existentialism, ed. and intro. Rayner Heppenstall, trans. E.M. Cooks (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1946), p.46, claims "we are witnessing rather the expertise of a skilled stage director than a sincere mental labour."

and the content of the "act of walking" are unified in the "very act of thinking which creates both form and content." Gallagher subsumes this picture under the notion of "turning toward the light," which is the facing of "mystery" for Marcel. Thus, the end of the path where the light appears is never temporally achieved, making Marcel's journey toward it appear to be a twisting and turning sort. Philosophical thought is the constant renewal of a vision of light and it is that vision of light which is the continuing impulse for this renewal.[15]

Marcel himself is somewhat less sanguine about this image than Gallagher appears to be. At one time he expresses outright dissatisfaction that his thought has taken on this "sinuous" form.[16] Noting in the Gifford Lectures that this image seems "imposed" on him, he still raises two objections concerning the notion of space it conjures up and the implication that the destination of the road is already known. Marcel replies that any metaphor has the problem of physical images for nonphysical properties; he adds that this might not be a disadvantage in this case if we can imagine the "spatiality of inner experience". Further, he denies that his type of philosophy leads to any "result" which may be grasped, as a thing in time and space, again showing the value of the metaphor only if taken in a nonspatial way.[17]

That Marcel is unsure of this metaphor is supported

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[15] C.f. Kenneth T. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), pp.10-12. Gallagher quotes many sources in Marcel and elsewhere to support his use of this image; c.f. pp.159-160; also, c.f. MBI, pp.63-76 for Marcel's use of this metaphor.

[16] C.f. HV, p.60.

[17] C.f. MBI, pp.3-4.

by further evidence. In a 1943 essay he stated that "we must regard the image of a journey as misleading."[18] Though he hesitantly came back to the image in the Gifford Lectures, and even mentioned it in the William James Lectures,[19] it is of interest to note that in 1943, and again eighteen years later, he concentrated on two other helpful images.

In 1943, Marcel said the notions of "point of departure" and "point of arrival" are illusions without meaning. He provided the following metaphor of the wary gardner:

> Imagine a certain clearing of the ground which takes place on the spot, which is indeed only effective on that condition, but of which the successful results can never be considered as finally consolidated. There is always a risk that weeds will spread in the furrows which have been so laboriously ploughed, there will always be swarms of pestilent insects to threaten future harvests. Hence comes the necessity for constant vigilance which cannot be relaxed without compromising everything.[20]

In 1961, Marcel suggested the metaphor of the explorer. He is on an "adventure" seeking . . . He seeks whatever he finds. His is a <u>versuch</u>, signifying the trial nature of his venture, rather than pursuing an "inquiry" aiming at certain results. Having noted in typical phenomenological style the different levels of a "search"--a search to find an object and the search to meet a need--he asserts that "philosophical research," as opposed to these other kinds, searches for nothing in particular and the surroundings are often unfamiliar. This kind of philosopher will be an "ecstatic" explorer, welcoming all his eye catches as he progresses into "virgin land". <u>He will be creatively receptive</u>. Like a bright adolescen

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[18] HV, p.135.

[19] EBHD, p.17.

[20] HV, pp.135-36.

in new surroundings, he will be dissatisfied with pat answers. Discovery will go ahead for its own sake. Any painful effort this requires will serve only to enhance the value of the discovery.[21]

Thus, the metaphors proliferate. Gallagher is probably wrong to make so much of the image of the "winding path". It does not provide the only, or necessarily the best, image of Marcel's philosophical method. Marcel's own reservations about this image and the fact that he suggests other equally fortuitous symbols would lead us to say that no one image satisfies all the requirements.

I would suggest that the image of the explorer may be the most fruitful if it were more fully elaborated. We may think of the philosopher's starting point as his "being-in-the-world". From this encampment he makes sorties into the unexplored area in his vicinity. He does not lay any claim over, or establish a permanent position on, the ground traversed. He has a growing realisation that the insight he has gained into his surroundings does not allow him to claim any expertise, since he only becomes more profoundly aware of his own ignorance when contrasted with the backdrop of the vast unexplored region which remains. Nevertheless, it is the awesome nature of his surroundings, which because of his deep interest never loses its compelling character, that keeps him in active exploration though the assured results sometimes appear negligible.

Such is the picture of Marcel's thought. This picture is an improvement on the notion of a journey, in that Marcel finds that which is worthy of discovery to be very close at

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[21] C.f. EBHD, pp.5-11.

hand. This is where Marcel discovers "buried treasure". There i refusal to add one more philosophical doctrine to the present abundance.[22] The refusal to think his exploration in any way accomplished is in line with his insistance that philosophical contemplation simply makes one more aware of the vast "mystery of being" in which we are called to participate. The danger that Marcel sees in much contemporary philosophy is pictured by the threat that the explorer will become a collector of specimens rather than a searcher for its own sake. (In the picture of the wary gardner this aspect would be displayed by the vigilant nature of his guard against weeds and pestilence. This picture of risk is not clear in that of the "winding path".) The fact of the circularity of Marcel's thought, indeed of any metaphysic worthy of the name, is displayed by the explorer's repeated sorties which turn out to be deeper penetration into his own environment.

The idea of progress, hinted at in the feeling of "worthwhileness" which the search gives the explorer, is nevertheless inadequately treated in this picture, as it is equally overemphasized in the picture of the "winding path". I agree with Gallagher that Marcel's "dominant symbol of light must be added to complete this or any other metaphor of his thought. The human side of this illumination is what Marcel calls "exigence" in human beings; William Ernest Hocking sees this inner urgency to be at once "more primitive and more universal than Kierkegaard's theologically weighted, Angst."[23]

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[22] C.f. MBI, p.1.

[23] C.f. William Ernest Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics" Philosophy and Phenomenological Research. Vol. XIV, (June, 1954), p.444.

To define that light would be to define the "ontological mystery" itself. That is just what defies our best efforts and keeps the explorer "turning toward the light" in the vague area of his newly discovered surroundings.[24]

It will be apparent that Marcel is in danger of falling off a very narrow razor edge in the area he has chosen to explore. On the left is the spector of Sartrean arbitrariness which manufactures for itself that which has valuable reality. On the right is the hoary ghost of an idealism which gave birth to Marcel's reflections. The one case points to the explorer choosing his discoveries and giving them a value in a willy-nilly way; the other side seems to point to a discovery which has already been found as an idea which pushed the explorer into action. Marcel provides us, in his own words, with the picture of a man who "is meking his way along a narrow path between deep chasms, toward an end which is not of this world, but without which this world would become engulfed in pure nonsense."[25]

I would suggest that Marcel faces a greater danger from the discredited idealistic tradition. His later writings, as he has come more and more to identify himself from within a Catholic tradition, bear this trait. The way he has just described his twin dangers, (though I am not sure he has the two in mind which we have mentioned) gives us a hint of what Robert F. Creegan has called "the hyperphenomenology and the implicit idealism" of Marcel.[26] Marcel's own explicit

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[24]I would think that the image which Gallagher emphasizes gives a picture more of man qua man in this world rather than of man qua thinker, though if he would reply that for Marcel the two are inseparable, I would have to concur; c.f. HV, p.155.

[25]EBHD, p.15.

[26]Review of Kenneth Gallagher's study of Marcel, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research (June, 1963), Vol. XXIII, p.623.

relinquishment of idealism should in itself cause us to question this assertion. Patricia F. Sanborn says, in so many words, that if Marcel refuses the left-wing answer of the explorer's "achieved self," he is left only with a "realized self" on his own terms.[27] This criticism is justified unless one understands Marcel's effort to escape this impasse by the insertion of a secondary reflection as a means of participation beyond the part-whole categories.[28] (We shall discuss secondary reflection in a later chapter.)

These metaphors should have illuminated the fact that Marcel sees the method of philosophy to be inextricably bound up in the results it achieves. In fact, such a dichotomous way of expressing it is misleading. In the first place, there is an inner aesthetic relation between mode and content. Marcel, for example, refuses to make an absolute separation between lived and represented music. He says:

> As I go from note to note, a certain whole takes shape, a form builds up which can certainly not be reduced to a succession of organic states, any more than an object is to be confused with the perceptible changes that its presence causes in the subject.[29]

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[27] C.f. Gabriel Marcel's Concept of the Self, unpublished Columbia University doctoral thesis, (1965), p.125.

[28] It is at this point that Marcel might recall the value of the neo-Platonist insistence on a "higher unity," though he would want to qualify that to a large extent; c.f. Gabriel Marcel, "Theism and Personal Relationships," Cross Currents, Vol. I, (Fall, 1950), p.37.

[29] C.f. Gabriel Marcel, "Bergsonism and Music," Reflections on Art: A Source Book of Writings by Artists, Critics and Philosophers, Susanne K. Langer, ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1958), p.146, as translated from "La Revue Musicale," Vol. VI, (1925), pp.219-229.

But it is more than an aesthetic union. As a matter of fact, this aesthetic union would seem to have its roots in a deeper metaphysical reality. There is a kind of circularity in this method established by the fact that this way of doing philosophy is intimately connected with the ontological mystery. A philosopher is a person who asks the "true questions".[30] When Marcel so defines the philosopher's task it certainly involves a refusal to separate what the question is from the way it is asked.[31] Marcel insists that there is an unbreakable link between "investigation" and the "final outcome" of the research.[32] This would indicate that philosophy is not goal-oriented but is rather, in a real sense, an end in itself.

D. System Building?

Marcel has been subjected to severe criticism because his work lacks a systematic formulation. This lack, if it may be so-called, is shared with most of the other philosophers who may be called existentialists. Yet Marcel seems to have received more than his share of criticism for this alleged deficiency. Even a number of commentators who are in general sympathy with Marcel's efforts, find this to be a chink in Marcel's armour.

Marcel's Objections to System Building. Just why does Marcel oppose the systematic elaboration of his thought?

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[30] MBI, p.12.

[31] C.f. MBI, pp.12-13.

[32] MBI, p.5; Here I am reminded of Kierkegaard's use of the "indirect method" as an indispensable part of communicating truth, though I think his emphasis is aimed at the aesthetic effect, while Marcel may have this less in mind.

We know that the Metaphysical Journal was originally intended as private jottings for what would eventually see the light of day as a "systematic presentation".[33] But by the year 1923 he had made a discovery about himself:"I would be being unfaithful to myself if I tried to set out in a systematic form what had occurred to me in quite a different way."[34] Thus, he allowed the Journal to be published as it was originally jotted down. Writing on Bergson's philosophy in 1925, Marcel said:

> It seems he would say that the time has come for the philosopher to cease making over-ambitious syntheses and be satisfied with limited results that will gradually organize themselves . . .[35]

I think he was including his own position in such a remark at a time when "in utter obscurity" he was beginning to fight himself clear of the "periods of anguish" caused him by his encounter with the still prevailing idealistic tradition.[36]

Marcel's intermediate writings show the same antipathy to systematisation. The very title of one of these works, Homo Viator, hints at this fact. In the major essay on "hope," Marcel defines it as that which defies an all embracing rational system: Hope has "the power of making things fluid"; it is lost out of sight if viewed from the point of view of "established experience".[37] He said during this same intermediate period that he was more "fully self-conscious" of the impossibility for him of making a serious attempt to

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[33] MJ, p.vii.
[34] MJ, p.vii.
[35] Langer, op.cit., p.143.
[36] MBI, pp.15-16.
[37] HV, pp.41 & 52.

integrate his own experience "with the qualities it has hic et nunc, with its singularities and even its deficiencies which in part make it what it is."[38]

The later works of Marcel show an increased confidence in face of the criticism of his lack of system. (Such confidence is not necessarily a virtue in Marcel's scheme of things.) The most he will say of the Gifford Lectures is that they compose an "approximate synthesis" of his thought.[39] He then insists that philosophers must remain on an "adventure" for systems are "doomed to dry up rapidly".[40]

Marcel has made one statement on the matter which is possibly his most--dare I say it--systematic. The introduction to Du Refus a L'Invocation opens in this manner: "The reader will find nothing in the present volume remotely resembling a system of metaphysics."[41] He explains why one should not expect such a system for the following reasons: First, he reiterates his objection that the mind cannot find such a vantage point in relation to his own experience. Second, he describes in clear fashion the twin exigences of the desire to systematise: the urge to "exercise increasing control" and the complementary motivation to make it public that this system is my own "property". Third, if a philosopher

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[38] CF, p.14. How this recalls Kierkegaard's opposition to Hegel's system!

[39] EBHD, p.3; Charles D. Kean rightly says in "The Existential Basis for Religion," Religion in Life (1953), Vol. IV, p.610, that the call to present "a systematic approach to religious truth," the original purpose of the Gifford Lectures, is at the "very opposite role" from Marcel's stance. Marcel himself, in a place I cannot find, expressed reservations about how well he had fitted into the strictures of this lectureship.

[40] EBHD, p.4.

[41] CF, p.3.

develops a system it is simply very often the desire to assuage the "inferiority complex" he has had in relation to the scientist "for the past fifty years". Fourth, there is Marcel's continued insistence that "the transcendent cannot be identified with any conceptual point of view," which is to say in another way that his philosophy revolves around a realit that is beyond the competent grasp of the rational mind either in part or in whole. Instead, Marcel says that "the absolute" can only be apprehended in an "oblique" way. Fifth, Marcel invokes the authority of Kierkegaard, Jaspers and "in all likelihood," Heidegger, to the effect that "existence (and a fortiori transcendence) can only be apprehended or evoked in a realm beyond that of thought in general which must operate by means of signs on the contents of the objective world."[42]

It would appear appropriate here to summarise what seem to be Marcel's prime objections to a systematic philosophy: First, he believes it is an illusion that any thinker can so abstract from his own experience in such a way as to incorporate it into his system. It will be recognised that this is a corollary to the earlier discussion to the effect, that for Marcel, the way one does philosophy is intimately connected to the answers he attains; the conclusion is simply that if one attempts to abstract from his own experience and put that thought in systematic form, he will find that structure he has built collapsing around his feet by the onrush of his own experience in time and space. The one alternative here would be an academic treatise of a rather irrelevant nature. Second, there is the closely related notion

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[42] C.f. CF, pp.3-5 for this summary of opposition to systematisation.

that there is a certain lack of integrity in the urges which push this system toward its completion. Marcel says somewhere that such philosophers shut their eyes to the fact that they are leaving something out in order to achieve cohesion and consistency. This point, which borders on a moral judgement, is closely related to Marcel's distinction between "being" and "having," with the systematiser yielding to the ever present temptation to have a philosophy which he may call his own. Third, Marcel conceives of the philosopher as a man with a mission. The mission is to engage in exploration with others rather than to build a great structure on a chosen site. Systems are like abandoned mansions with the windows broken out; they still stand but they are reduced to mere hulks in comparison with their original majesty. Marcel, not without a touch of egoism on his own part, desires that his reflections should have a more lasting place than the derelict mansions of by-gone systematisers. I think he would be more content with the metaphor of an unfinished symphony beginning to strike chords of reconciliation, as a picture of his own endeavor. Fourth, the question concerning the nature of the "ontological mystery" arises. Suffice it to say at this point, that Marcel believes that "mystery" offers a perpetual resistance to systematic treatment. As Kierkegaard said, "System is not known from this side."

Marcel's position on this matter, as on so many others, is not as clearly defined as we have so far indicated. He has had mixed feelings about the lack of system in his work. He probably has not been untouched by the critics who have refused to accept him into the ranks of serious philosophy because of the rambling nature of his thoughts. In the preface to Homo Viator we read, after acknowledging the difficulty

of finding one's way through a series of essays instead of a logically developed treatise:

> I should have liked to produce such a treatise . . . Now, however, I have reached the melancholy conclusion that I shall never write it. Moreover, I feel rather irritated and annoyed with myself, because I am aware that I shall most certainly not be conforming to all the rules which have been almost universally observed in the philosophic game up to the present day.[43]

The "call" to give the Gifford Lectures may have eased that "irritation" to a degree but it did not completely clear up the conflict. Rather recently Marcel has written that the "nostolgia for system building" still remains in him.[44] He goes ahead to pay tribute to Louis Lavelle, Bergson's successor, for the "rigor" of his thought though he admits that his "admiration is mingled with a certain distrust" for which there is probably sound basis.[45]

In addition to these hesitant reservations, there is the unconfirmed report from that observer of European thought, I.M. Bochénski. He said in a 1956 publication that Marcel had at that time given preliminary announcement of a forthcoming principle work to be called: Research into the Essence of Spiritual Life.[46] The implication of Bochénski's statement, from the context of the remark, was that this was to be Marcel's attempt to lend system to his thoughts. The title, however, does not point in a systematic direction even though

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[43] HV, p.7.

[44] CF, p.3.

[45] CF, p.3.

[46] C.f. I.M. Bochénski, Contemporary European Philosophy. trans. Donald Nicholl and Karl Aschenbrenner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p.181.

it is directed toward the essence of the matter. At any rate, that volume has yet to appear over a decade later. It probably will never appear if it was to be a system of thought in any traditional sense. This in spite of Marcel's evident inner conflict over the issue.

Criticism of Marcel's Lack of System. As has been noted, many commentators have considered it a serious flaw in Marcel's philosophy that he has not produced a systematic presentation.[47] Their criticism has been so intensive that it requires due consideration here. Even those who are generally favourable to Marcel, tend to balk at the scattered nature of his thought. For, it must be admitted, that it does not even take on a clear schematic nature as in the writings of Kierkegaard. Criticism on this matter is widespread.[48]

Even those who have been relatively successful themselves in organizing Marcel's thought into a systematic presentation have been critical in various ways of his nonsystem. Roger Troisfontaines, the careful student of Marcel, took

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[47]C.f., for example, D.J.B. Hawkins, "The Philosophy of Theism" The New Outline of Modern Knowledge. Alan Pryce-Jones, ed. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1956), p.54.

[48]For example, note Bochénski's complaint that his thought is difficult to collate, loc. cit. Also, Dom Illtyd Trethowan and Dom Mark Pontifex, The Meaning of Existence: A Metaphysical Enquiry (London: Longman's Green & Co., 1953), p.195, where they complain that Marcel exhibits "an almost morbid dislike of reaching definite conclusions," a point connected with his nonsystem certainly. Further, Trethowan indicates irritation about the "allusive and elliptical" nature of Marcel's thought in Review of Mystery of Being, Vol.II, Downside Review, Vol.LXX (Winter, 1951-1952), p.95.

pains to form Marcel's work into a systematic form.[49] Hocking, confidant of Marcel and noted philosopher in his own right, analysed Marcel's bias against systematic presentation of ontology as follows: Marcel insists that the systematic world is not "real," for reality, entertaining arrangements, cannot be itself an arrangement, and hence, ontology must lie beyond system: "And since to judge is 'rapporter à une systeme,' it becomes doubtful whether any objective judgement on 'being' is possible."[50] Hocking is ultimately critical of this position and suggests an alternative on Marcel's own terms: He suggests that there may be a distinction to be drawn between a closed, dogmatic system and an open system which is like drawing "something statable . . . into the open net".[51] Hocking then continues by proposing that Marcel really intends "a system-from-within" which is the seeking of coherent, increasingly expressible reality, while rightly denying the validity of the imposed "system-from-without".[52] Hocking adds significantly: "This [open] type [of system] is compatible with the broader empiricism which seems to me the essential trait of Marcel's method . . . In substance, system-from-within is simply a man's necessary concern for his own mental integrity, and for his good faith with his fellow-enquirers."[53]

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[49] De L' Existence à L' Être. Two volumes (Paris: J.Vrin, 1953).

[50] Op.cit., p.440. This analysis generally coincides with our summary statement of Marcel's objections to a systematic presentation of his own thoughts by himself.

[51] Ibid., p.439.

[52] Ibid., p.460.

[53] Ibid., p.461.

Kenneth Gallagher, too, is critical of Marcel's lack of system. It is the first of two major exceptions which he takes in an otherwise favourable evaluation of Marcel.[54] He suggests that Marcel is "tempermentally unsuited" to systematisation. Further, he agrees with Marcel that the thinker cannot be a spectator, but he abjures Marcel's conclusion that this denies the possibility of a system.[55] This leads him to say: "To believe so would be to slight one of the profound exigences of the subject, the exigence for unity."[56]

Gallagher's reference would seem to be a similar, if less profound, sort of criticism to that leveled by Hocking. Gallagher's objection differs slightly in that he suggests it is the need for "unity," rather than the need for "communication," which calls for system. I doubt if either of these objections, one stimulated by American pragmatism and the other aroused by Thomist intellectualism, are adequate to overcome Marcel's positive reasons for pursuing his informal type of thought. I would agree with what Jacques Maritain once said in another context, that it is always a question of whether we will attempt to "overcome" or "awaken" the other. Marcel has clearly chosen the latter, of course.

It is important to notice that not all commentators on Marcel have considered Marcel's disavowel of system as a negative factor. Roger Hazelton speaks of "these critics [who] would rather apply adjectives like 'suggestive' or

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[54] C.f. Gallagher, op.cit., pp.148-150.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

'penetrating', thus giving Marcel a high B for the course."[57] Hazelton would prefer to give Marcel a higher grade. He observes Marcel's position on system as follows: First, Marcel does not pretend to offer the philosophy or a complete philosophy. Second, there is a purpose in his nonsystematic position; it is not just an accidental fault. Third, there is the fact that Marcel [and I would add, the vast majority of his critics] "perceive a dessein or pattern which is the 'love of discovery' expressed in his heuristic method."[58]

Hazelton proceeds to make a valuable analysis in which he indicates how Marcel's position on method coincides with his understanding of ontological mystery. After admitting that Marcel's "strictures against identity and the concept of absolute knowledge are well taken," he asks a question similar to that of Gallagher:

> My question is only whether, if there is something like totality of being, must there not be something like a system in metaphysics or the thought of being?[59]

Hazelton answers in words which recall Hocking's approach. He says:

> If thought is the interiorization of being . . . then . . . we must ask whether being can be thought at all; if it can, it must be thought as being; and, again, one should be able to express this thought.[60]

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[57] "Marcel On Mystery," Journal of Religion, Vol. XXXVIII (July, 1958), p.165.

[58] Ibid., p.166.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

If this answer appears inconclusive, it is because Hazelton does not give a definite answer to his tentative question.

Hazelton does propose that Marcel has contributed something more important than a metaphysical system. His is an idiom "which shows beyond any doubt that human thought and language can become viable and permeable to the promptings of being."[61] Hazelton calls this method of allusion a "manner of speaking metaphysically" which ultimately leads us "beyond metaphysics".[62] This speaks of the convergence of faith and metaphysics in Marcel. Hazelton, at this point, compares Marcel to Augustine:

> It may well be therefore, that, by this metaphysics of humility and fidelity, of 'openness' and 'availability', Marcel has been setting forth for our time the Christian wisdom of Augustine's motto, non intratur in veritatum nise per caritatem; one enters into truth only by the way of love.[63]

There are others who speak in noncritical fashion of Marcel's lack of system. Lionel A. Blain refers to the "deep unity" of Marcel's thought.[64] Patricia Sanborn says that Marcel's thought is certainly subject to systematisation.[65] E.L. Allen seems to be favourable when he refers to Marcel's thought as designed to "elicit truth from his readers rather than to give it to them."[66]

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[61] Ibid., p.167.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., p.166.
[64] Introduction to PF, p.31.
[65] Op.cit., p.6.
[66] "Gabriel Marcel: A Theatre of Sincerity," Contemporary Review, Vol. CLXXXI (February, 1952), p.99.

John E. Smith illumines the issue when he sees that Marcel's position on method puts him in step with early existentialists such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche; he adds:

> It remains a serious question, therefore, whether the original intent of the 'revolt of existence' is not sacrificed when a systematic philosophy of existence appears on the scene.[67]

Smith adds in favour of Kierkegaard that he knew

> what contemporary existentialists seem to have forgotten (or perhaps never learned)--that it is only if the existential philosopher does not produce a system of philosophy but uses an indirect and 'subjective' mode of communication, that he can perform his task.[68]

Smith states that only Marcel and Unamuno, among contemporary writers, have learned this lesson.[69] It is worth noting that though Marcel did not learn this lesson from Kierkegaard, he absorbed it in the same manner--by reacting against "the system" of the idealists. Marcel and his Spanish contemporary are really searchers after meaning, especially "moral and religious" meaning. It remains a serious question as to whether or not such meaning can ultimately conform to any systematic expression. It is my belief that Marcel adds substance to Smith's "no".[70]

Marcel's Nonsystem Evaluated. Knowing that the greater weight of opinion disagrees, I believe that Marcel's latterly increased assurance about the validity of his nonsystem is well founded.

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[67]"The Revolt of Existence," Yale Review, Vol. XLIII (Spring, 1954), pp.367-68.

[68]Ibid., p.369.

[69]Ibid., p.371.

[70]Ibid.

It will be necessary to hear and judge Marcel's own opinions on this issue, as well as those of his critics, in order to reach a definite conclusion of our own. After due consideration, I believe that Marcel is justified to see this nonsystematic approach as intrinsic to his whole attempt to discover a viable ontology beyond the categories of substance. There is an inner coherence which a purely systematic presentation could not duplicate. Both as a protest against sterile thinking and as fruitful method in itself, Marcel has rightly continued to avow his deliberate intention of avoiding "the system" and its coincident dangers. I will suggest some reasons why this judgement seems true.

Marcel's mind is evidently capable of organisation. Marcel may indeed have a tempermental weakness at this juncture, as Gallagher suggests, but he has not admitted this to my knowledge. Indeed, his essays could often do with a bit more editing and closer juxtaposition of similar ideas. Yet, while it may be true, as Bochénski claims, that Marcel's views are more difficult to put together than those of any other existentialist, the fact remains that writers such as Roger Troisfontaines, Kenneth Gallagher and Vincent Miceli have succeeded in doing just this. Others like W.E. Hocking, R. Ostermann, and Louis Pamplume, to name but a few, have been able to do the same on a less detailed level. Further, it is not so much an unorganized approach to a subject, which is confusing in Marcel, though it must be admitted that he sometimes goes off on divergent tangents, but rather it is the fact that his important works have appeared in so many widely separated times and places. For the sake of communication, Marcel should have sought to make the whole of his thought more accessible. Yet, the evidence that Marcel is

capable of systematic thought is suggested by his obvious brilliance of mind. It is further supported by the systematic treatment he has given of Royce's Metaphysics, a standard work on the American philosopher, which has often been called the best in the field up to this decade. Marcel's treatment of Jaspers, contained as an essay in Creative Fidelity, is markedly and coherently systematic. I would suspect, also, that his early thesis on Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Friedrich von Schelling was systematic in style, though I do not have access to it. The essays in Philosophical Fragments are clearly systematic. Most of these facts have gone unmentioned by all commentators to my knowledge. They have failed to take note of the objectivity--almost coldness--in Marcel's thought. It is significant that this ability to systematise usually appears in the context of sustained analysis of another man's thought. It is true that the systematic approach appears most often in early works; this may be explained by the fact that Marcel was still ridding himself of idealism's influence. If it be complained that this shows that it is precisely Marcel's original and creative work that he cannot systematise, Marcel would simply agree that such a criticism is for him a self-sufficient explanation.

It is important to notice that Marcel is seldom criticised for the unintelligible nature of his thought, such as British writers are apt to do in relation to Martin Heidegger, for instance. Even those who would seem to wish Marcel were more systematic, such as Gallagher, often seem to be referring to nothing more than the wish of a commentator to have his material in a slightly more ordered and

accessible fashion.[71] Certainly Blain and Hazelton are correct in speaking of the "unity" of Marcel's thought. It is neither an accusation of rigidity or a deliberate denial of the early idealistic influence to say that one can quite easily speak of Marcel's thought as being of one piece. There is no commentator who feels constrained to talk of an "early Marcel" or a "later Marcel" or a "Marcel of the middle period".[72]

Thus, while system may not be a trait common to Marcel's thought, the basis of system, a penetrating and organising mind, is present in Marcel should he choose to use it. Hazelton strikes a key note when he notes that Marcel prefers to speak of 'fulness,' or 'wholeness' or 'unity' rather than a cumulative systematic cumulation of parts. Even as Marcel regards human existence as sursum, we should see his thought forms as more than the sum of their parts. His itinerant style is designed to give this truth artistic substance and more. This indicates the fact, previously emphasized, that philosophical method for Marcel is an integral part of the ontological mystery and if that method is to penetrate to the light of mystery it must use a receptor capable of refracting that light.

Concerning the unity of Marcel's thought it is important to notice the facile transference from dramatic to

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[71] It would seem, too, that there is a certain inconsistency between Gallagher's positive evaluation of Marcel's "winding path" and his criticism of Marcel's lack of system. He cannot have it both ways.

[72] R.D. Cumming may be an exception to this statement, but he is resentfully critical of Marcel for some reason, and his criticism pertains to an alleged gradual loosening of Marcel's thought patterns; c.f. Review of Metaphysical Journal, Mystery of Being, Vol. II, and Man Against Mass Society, The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. L (November 5, 1953), p.702.

philosophical expression. The William James Lectures were designed to make this relationship clear. As a dramatist, Marcel refuses to treat his characters as puppets; he consequently does not force his plays to reach any well-defined conclusion. More precisely, his characters are too much involved in the ambiguities of themselves and their relationship to others to allow for any such clearly satisfying denouement. This same characteristic is apparent in his philosophical writing, though possibly to a lesser extent because of the more intellectual nature of this form. Whatever may be said of his plays, they are not an attempt to expound a thesis, a characteristic so pronounced in the theatres of Sartre and Camus. On the contrary, one feels that the plot grows out of the interaction of the characters, in an uncoerced manner. Much the same may be said on the more s[73] of recognition" as a result of careful philosophical far as "reconnoitring".
out of[74] the concrete approach to ontology--sounds which ring true.[73]

A commentator has stated that Marcel's lack of system is a "melancholy conclusion" for him.[74] Another has stated, on the other hand, that Marcel has come to "rejoice" in his lack of system.[75] If I can judge from the content of what Marcel has written, the truth probably lies somewhere in between these two assessments. Marcel has developed a

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[73] C.f. MBI, pp.139-142 concerning sounds which bring "acts of recognition" as a result of careful philosophical "reconnoitring".

[74] C.f. André Lalande, "Philosophy in France, 1934-35," Philosophical Review, Vol. XLV (1936), p.7.

[75] C.f. Emmanuel Mounier, Existentialist Philosophies: An Introduction, trans. Eric Blow (London: Rockliff, 1948), p.112.

unitary thought which may be called "systematic without being a closed system".[76]

Concluding Statement. Marcel's methodical nonsystem stamps him in the existentialist branch of philosophy of the type seen in Pascal, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Unamuno. It is this, in fact, which causes Marcel's philosophy to contain an authentic sound. A systematic presentation, as most commentators interpret system, would not destroy Marcel's thought, but it would diminish it appreciably since we would lose the impression that we are overhearing a brilliant and sensitive person think out loud about man's ultimate concerns. It would seem that John E. Smith may have had Marcel in mind when he said:

> Is it not rather the case that the only genuine 'existentialism' is one in which men are not simply given a theory about existence, but one in which men are called back in Socratic fashion to an awareness of their own existence and especially to some conviction concerning what they are to do in practical terms.[77]

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[76] Anonymous, "The Thought of Gabriel Marcel," Times Literary Supplement (March 26, 1954), p.xvi. Hocking's suggestion that since ultimate reality is capable of being stated, Marcel should move toward an "open system," is a positive suggestion. It would seem that Hazelton would echo it. We shall discover, however, that Marcel is less sure about the "sayableness" of reality than Hocking seems to be. Also, it could be argued that an "open system" is exactly what Marcel has achieved.

[77] Op. cit., p.366.

"If things were due to man's creation, he would know them absolutely in language."

Max Picard

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL LANGUAGE

A. Preliminary Remarks

As a European man of letters, it is to be assumed that Marcel has been concerned about the use of words. Watching the broad spectrum of language production, as a philosopher, dramatist and literary-drama critic, naturally entailed an appreciation of language in most of its forms. As a literary figure, there has been a journalistic type of expression. In his own works, though they are not at all lyrical, he shows insight into the evocative imagery of French poets such as Paul Claudel and Paul Valéry, the German poet, R.M. Rilke, the Anglo-American writer, T.S. Eliot, and the purely American, Walt Whitman, among others. His plays give evidence of an acute ear for dialogical language. But it is in his philosophical material, our primary interest, that his concern for the meaning of words makes itself most evident.

It is characteristic of Marcel to engage in the analysis of an important word in the pursuit of his philosophical investigations. He does not do this on a scrap sheet of paper beside his developing manuscript, but as an integral part of the progressing discourse. Though this

is probably indicative of the informal nature of his writing, the true reason would seem to be on a more profound level. Even in his most carefully developed theses, such as the Gifford Lectures, he pauses to engage a term in conversation as to its meaning.[1] This suggests that he does not regard language as a mere tool in philosophical investigation, but as an integral part of the meaning which research unearths.

It is common for Marcel to carefully choose between German, English and French terms in order to discover that one which with most precision conveys his meaning.[2] It would seem that he takes umbrage at the "overly flexible syntax" possible in the German language, as in the philosophy of Karl Jaspers.[3] He, on the other hand, finds, with a few exceptions, that the English language is much too inflexible and confining.[4]

Marcel prefers to use the language of the nontechnical person. Though there are baffling passages in the early Fragments and in the Journal, Marcel's writing has tended to be the most accessible of the contemporary existentialists. He explicitly abjures the neologisms of Heidegger.[5] While his philosophy is not an attempt to communicate with the masses, he does believe that the philosopher, among other things, should consider it his duty

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[1] For example, MPI, p.140, 146, 172; also, MBII, p. 3, 18-19.

[2] This is so common it is scarcely worth supporting. However, c.f. MBI, p.140.

[3] CF, p.228.

[4] MBII, p.17.

[5] MAH, p.85.

to avoid complete absorption in some abstruse philosophical domain.

It is this attitude toward communication which has made philosophy a live issue in France, especially since the vital writings of Henri Bergson. It is precisely the refusal to automatically identify involved technical jargon with learnedness or wisdom which is responsible for this fact. It is connected with an admirable trait Marcel attributes to Jules Lagneau; the refusal to fall into "servitude to words".[6]

B. Dangers in Language

Marcel considers language, most often in the context of its decline. In "le monde casse'," which is our environment, it is necessary to understand before proceeding into philosophical discourse, that language itself has suffered immeasurably. Also, there is a perennial fact about language that we must consider: it tends to deprive us of that which is worthy of holding close to us. It is with these two factors in mind that Marcel is constantly warning his readers of the use of words, though it is not clear if he has in his own mind separated the particular problem of our contemporary "broken world" from the essential problem of language itself.

Concerning language in "le monde casse'," it would seem that it is the threat of science and technology, discussed more fully in other parts of this thesis, that makes for the ambiguity in our use of language. He complains that words today tend to be used only for "practical" purposes; consequently terms "tend to become more and more

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[6] MAH, p.83.

hermetic" and as a result, tend to lose their "evocative power".[7] It is clear, at this point, that the scientific impulse of our modern world has contributed heavily to the downfall of language.

It would seem, however, that our time has only witnessed an aggravation of a problem already intrinsic to language. Marcel's analysis is based on Bergson's conviction that language tends to misconstrue because it is "modeled on things".[8] From this standpoint, Marcel charges that words "clot" the free flow of thought.[9] He asserts that "traps" lie hidden in the use of words causing hinderance to the attainment of our goal.[10]

It would seem, then, that for Marcel, the use of words is complicated by two factors: The main problem for the philosopher is that words in themselves seem to be molded after the fashion of a purely objective world; we seem to be obliged to use spatial imagery even when the "object" of our discussion is both more significant and less objectifiable than that.[11] This matter is complicated by the fact that in our world language is used more often to tie things down than to evoke images. This fact makes philosophy, as Marcel conceives it, even more difficult than usual.

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[7] MBI, p.209.
[8] EBHD, p.77.
[9] MBI, p.14 and MBII, p.11. Marcel adds, in the prior reference, that there is special difficulty in detachedly studying words "charged with passion" or having "taboo-value," as in the term "democracy".
[10] MBI, p.209.
[11] C.f. MBI, p.215.

C. Three Levels of Language

I am suggesting, at this point, that three modalities of word usage are discernible in Marcel, though he does not make these distinctions himself. First, there is definitive language: The language used to close in and fasten down an object in the scientific sense. Second, there is evocative language: The language that inspires us to a new level of insight through its allusive imagery. Third, there is philosophical language: Though it never wholly achieves its independence from the other two categories, it strives to extract the deeper-than-life meaning out of all areas of expression.

This is certainly too stylised a categorisation to contain the elusive thought of Marcel. He would voice immediate criticism of the fact that definitive language has tended to displace the other categories. He might not give philosophy a more exalted place than evocative language, as this analysis implies. Certainly he would note that the line between drama and philosophy cannot be tightly drawn. There is much analysis contained within the body of his writings, as well as a more evocative expression, but does he achieve the third category he seeks to reach?

It may be instructive to observe that peculiar kind of language appropriate to philosophy. When it is applied to a description of the self, for example, it has interesting results. Form is merged with content in the following manner: Self existence is linked to "a kind of exclamatory awareness of oneself".[12] As Marcel explains: "Existence and exclamatory awareness of existence cannot be really separated."[13]

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[12] MBI, p.91.

[13] MBI, p.91.

Yet this existence cannot be buried under the scientific definition. For we all exist in a participatory "relation". It is not just that, "I exist"; it is that, "here I exist". That "here" which links the existent and his existence is never completely identifiable in an objectifiable fashion. Marcel gives an example: "It is perfectly clear that the soil to which the peasant is so passionately attached is not something about which he can really speak."[14] That is why Marcel speaks of the self as a "new category" which must be approached in a fashion both "concrete" and "alert to inner experience".[15]

It is the task of philosophical language to attempt to meet the requirements of describing, in an understandable manner, such a mysterious self. But such language must be able to cope with concrete, yet indefinable, referents. Marcel says of the self, for example, that it is a diverse, necessary "mysterious reality"; over against such a self the observable attributes must appear as "contingent" predicates.[16] Marcel conceives of a self which confers "reverberatory power" on facts but does not disintegrate before those facts. The self-existence of myself cannot be predicated, for in so doing I would turn myself into a mere object. Can language cope with this reality? Marcel is at least determined that it should not stand in the way:

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[14] MBI, p.116.
[15] MBI, p.79.
[16] MBI, p.87.

> But we should not allow ourselves to be halted here by difficulties which arise, in the last analysis, from an attempt to interpret philosophical thought as springing from the grammatical structure of language; the accusative case being linked, in that structure, to the object, and to the process of objectivization.[17]

It would seem from this quotation that human language is inadequate to cope with that which comes to the attention of the existential philosopher. Marcel even goes so far as to say that we "inevitably transform and degrade presence" when we speak of it.[18] This leaves us wondering if there really are several levels of speech. Certainly it explains why a philosopher like Marcel would not think of yielding up his dramatic endeavour. But this does not satisfy us as to why Marcel has concentrated on philosophy. If language is so inadequate a method of expression, why bother at all?

D. Ontological Language

It is significant that when Marcel comes to talk of "being," which for him is not so very far removed from the elucidation of selfhood, he becomes concerned with the problems of language. It is true, to a degree, that these allusions to the problem of terminology are an alibi which momentarily releases him from the full force of the difficulty.

But it must be kept in mind that it is precisely because of the way Marcel conceives of the nature of reality,

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[17] MBI, p.87.

[18] EBHD, p.60. Marcel once said: "When we speak of God know well that it is not of God that we speak."

as nonobjectifiable, that language appears to him as an almost insurmountable problem.[19] Yet he does not halt the discussion when he faces the misconstruing aspect of language; he continues to probe, giving large place to the evocative metaphor and the thoughtful elimination of false alternatives by the process of negation.

In the second series of the Gifford Lectures, the first two lectures of which consider the "mystery of being" in the most intensive way to be found in Marcel's works, this question of ontological language arises. Talking of the "intersubjective nexus," he asks if it can be "propositionally asserted." His answer is "no," because only a "fact," a "given," may be so put forward. This mysterious interhuman reality is so interlaced with my own being that to assert it is to change both my reality and the reality of which I speak. Indeed, Marcel claims that this "nexus" is "the necessary condition for anything being given to me--at least if 'given' is taken in its narrowest meaning." But does this nonassertive reality not then appear to be only a "wish"? No, though this "nexus" cannot be asserted, it may be "acknowledged".[20]

But what is the language of "acknowledgement"? Marcel says: "This recognition must assuredly be patient of translation into an expressible affirmation." He does not, however, go on to say just what kind of language this would be. He rather, in a way unique in his writings, relates language itself to the ontological mystery:

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[19] C.f. EBHD, p.77 ff.

[20] We shall speak of the interhuman in detail later.

> We should be careful to remember that the affirmation should possess a special character, that of being the root of every expressible affirmation. I should readily agree that it [the intersubjective nexus] is the mysterious root of language. These words should be taken literally; and you will understand that I am here referring to the definition of mystery.[21]

In so far as Marcel clears up the language of acknowledgement it appears to be something like this: I must affirm a structure, not a form or a fact. But it is the "inside of a structure," an inside in which I am involved, to which I allude.[22] The language can hardly escape the use of a spatial metaphor:

> I agree that I shall almost inevitably be led to try to make a picture for myself of this element . . . by that very act I shall deprive it of its own peculiar quality, which is a spiritual quality.[23]

But for Marcel, these metaphors are not just arbitrary. They are more than just allusions to another. They themselves must participate, to some extent, in that reality to which they attempt to refer.[24]

The language of "acknowledgement" would then appear to be primarily a metaphoric language, with the stipulation that some insight allows us to separate the valuable pictures from the rest. It would then, also, appear that philosophy itself comes very close to being an art form--another means of creativity. We see how very close indeed

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[21] MBII, p.11. Underlining mine.

[22] MBII, p.11.

[23] MBII, p.15.

[24] This notion stems from Bergson. Marcel calls these "structural metaphors". C.f. MBI, p.3.

drama and philosophy are for Marcel. Both grow up out of that illuminating world of music, a world which has a language all its own.[25]

Certainly Marcel puts his case on precarious ground when he selects music as a primary metaphor. It appears that he finally despairs of language of the verbal variety. He, also, is open to those who accuse him of moving from the rational to the sentimental--from enlightenment to romanticism. It is precisely these criticisms, however, that Marcel intends to answer. Though he does not say so, it would seem that his philosophy by its profusion, longevity and rational grasp, is intended to stand as a bulwark against the temptations to lapse into silence or into a nonverbal mode of expression. More important, he does not regard music as less communicative on a rational level than verbal language.[26]

There is the further problem of a possible contradiction. Is there not a dilemma which appears on the matter of the origin of language? Marcel approves Bergson's notion that language is "molded on things". He believes, too, that the "intersubjective nexus," as a form of the ontological mystery, is the "mysterious root of language". Why does this mysterious root give rise to such a divergent plant?

To this question, Marcel, to my knowledge, does not give an answer. He is absolved of the weight of a contradiction, however, if we see that he is talking of

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[25] MBII, p.15. Marcel refers to his research as similar to "resolving discordant chords" that make him "ill at ease". C.f. MBI, p.8.

[26] C.f. MAH, p.191. We shall refer later to Marcel's attitude toward certain music.

the origin of language when he refers to intersubjectivity and of the declining form this communication takes when he affirms Bergson's thesis that language tends to "thingify". For Marcel language remains an inadequate philosophical tool, yet he continues to use it with a measure of assurance as indicated by his refusal to coin words in the attempt to express a philosophical truth.

But does Marcel really have confidence in language to express philosophical truth? A negative reply would seem in order when we recall that he believes language suffers from both a perennial and a contemporary desease. His allusion to music as being both the more primitive, direct and satisfactory way of expression increases the negativity. But the affirmative side appears too: Marcel has continued to do philosophy in his later years. His method of doing philosophy is closely bound to the results he has attained, suggesting that the grammatical construction and the literary form the language takes on is not unrelated to the outcome of the investigation.[27] Though he does often refer to the "inexpressible," he does believe that it is the task of philosophy to search out and examine these elements in such a way that we see that even when analysis is completed we still find it impossible to make a final summation.

Marcel does admit the grave difficulties language arouses. But this does not prevent him from applying that language to the intangible, yet concrete, in the world.

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[27] C.f. MBI, p.5. Criticism of Paul Tillich on the basis that the systematic form of his theology was "out of kilter" with the sort of unity he sought to obtain seems well founded. On the other hand, form and content seem elegantly harmonious in Kierkegaard.

This he accomplishes by a careful choosing of words, by polishing up dormant meanings or by investing them with a new level of meaning. This, indeed, is an integral part of an ontological philosophy.

E. Marcel and Linguistic Analysis

By contemporary British standards, Marcel is not so much an inferior philosopher, as no philosopher at all. His essays would "stick out like a sore thumb" in Mind or Analysis and they would be only a bit more at home in Philosophy.[28] Yet I must agree that the "practitioners of linguistic exorcism," in spite of their skepticism could find a "ruthless self-confrontation" in Marcel's philosophy, in spite of the marked language differences.[29]

For the most part the analysts ignore this kind of philosophy. At times a remarkable insularity has evidenced itself among the analysts. (There are signs that this impasse is at long last crumbling away.) The desire for disinterested research causes them to find most existential writers meaningless. Usually they satirise the logical inconsistences they see in much Continental thought. Alasdair MacIntyre, for example, has said that Kierkegaard's use of "the absurd," Barth's use of "paradox," and Marcel's use of "mystery," all show an "easy toleration for contradiction and incoherence".[30] Such criticism indicates either

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[28] C.f. Alan Montefiore, "Philosophy in France," Philosophy, Vol. XXXII (July, 1957), p.254. The reference is to contemporary British journals of philosophy.

[29] C.f. D.H. Wright, Review of Homo Viator, Aberdeen University Review, Vol. XXXIV (Spring, 1952), p.265. Wright adds that the analysts would not remain "untouched" if they read Marcel.

[30] "Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing?" Faith and the Philosophers, John Hick, ed. (London: MacMillan, 1964), p.130.

resentment or ignorance. This sort of criticism is especially unfounded in Marcel's case, since one of the urgencies which propels his work is to show how reasonable reflection of a secondary sort bridges the logical gap to a remarkable degree.

On at least two occasions, scholars concerned with language analysis have taken Marcel seriously. Walker Percy has suggested that the analysts in their study of language may have stumbled upon the key to the conflict in philosophy: "It is the discovery of the symbolic transformation as the unique and universal human response."[31] By this he means to say that in some intrinsic way the referent and its name are bound together. As evidence he alludes to the excitement of Helen Keller when she discovered that "water" was the water in her hand and not a demand to do something like drink it, in response to a command. She immediately wanted to know "What everything else was!"[32] Percy goes on to assert that, "Symbolization is of its very essence an intersubjectivity."[33] The "we are" becomes present when the symbolization, "the joint affirmation," of the third factor is present. Thus, rather than Descartes', "I am conscious of the chair" or Sartre's, "There is consciousness of the chair," both of which "presuppose" consciousness, the truth would appear to be, "This is a chair for you and me, which joint action of designation and affirmation by symbol is itself the

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[31] "Symbol as Hermeneutic in Existentialism," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. XVI (June, 1956), p.524.

[32] Ibid., p.525.

[33] Ibid.

constituent act of consciousness."[34] Man, who is capable of "symbolic transformation," can be studied, not as a "qualified integer," as the empiricists sometimes seem to think, but as a "transcending reality" which can be approached by "a broad and untrammelled empiricism, a sensitivity and a neutrality before structures which will neither rule out nor preconceive causal connections for reason of doctrinal requirements."[35]

Willem F. Zuurdeeg claims, in line with his teacher, Nicolaas Westendorp Boerma of Amsterdam, that "we are our own convictions."[36] For Zuurdeeg, these convictions are of the conscious variety. A "convictus" is a person who believes and witnesses to that belief, though not necessarily in a "close-minded" way.[37] Zuurdeeg admits that there is a "heuristic" relation between witnessed conviction and analytical language but he insists that they must be kept separate.[38]

Both these writers show a profound awareness and admiration of Marcel's thought. It would seem that Percy's view of language would coincide closely with Marcel's position, which contains the hint that naming something "satisfies" a need not wholly definitive in nature.[39] In the context of this remark it is evident that

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[34] Ibid., p.526.

[35] Ibid., p.530.

[36] An Analytical Philosophy of Religion (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), p.58.

[37] Ibid., p.28.

[38] Ibid., p.264.

[39] MBII, p.13. He does not describe just what this satisfaction might be.

Marcel is talking of the conditions necessary for the establishment of the intersubjective relationship, which he regards to be close to the heart of the mystery of being. Thus, Percy's thesis that, "Symbolization is of its very essence an intersubjectivity," is in agreement with Marcel's assertion that intersubjectivity is the "mysterious root of language".[40] Certainly there is a mutual stress on the significance of language in the understanding of our relationship to being. It would seem, however, that Marcel does not identify intersubjectivity so much with the act of communication as with that "openness" which makes it possible. Though it must be clearly understood that in many of the examples of intersubjectivity which Marcel uses, the element of speech is often present, we cannot escape the fact that for Marcel there is something "unspeakable" about many of these instances, as in a peasant's association to his soil.[41] In fact, there is always something finally "unspeakable" about any of these structural metaphors. What Percy may not apprehend is that Marcel affirms the positive value of silence; this is the converse of his notion that speech often tends to degrade the presence of being.[42]

Marcel's relation to Zuurdeeg is a bit more complex. For one thing, Marcel, as Zuurdeeg notes, sees "conviction" as something "closed" rather than "open".[43] Further,

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[40] Supra, notes 21 and 33 in this chapter.

[41] This matter will be discussed later.

[42] C.f. Max Picard, The World of Silence (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952). Marcel writes a hearty preface to this volume; also, c.f. BH, p.113, where contemplative silence is said to have a "positive quality" that enables me to "regain possession of myself."

[43] Zuurdeeg, op.cit., p.25.

Marcel could not agree that "we are our own convictions," as Zuurdeeg seems to think he does; for, in addition to the point just made, Marcel believes that "we are" on a deeper level than the expression of that mystery.[44] Zuurdeeg suggests that Marcel should have written two different kinds of essays--ethical analyses and evaluations written on the basis of his liberal Roman Catholic position.[45] This advice, if taken seriously, would have destroyed whatever effectiveness in philosophy Marcel has achieved. His Gifford Lectures are an example of a remarkable combination of analysis and conviction. If Zuurdeeg seriously proposes this change in Marcel's philosophical method, it is quite clear that Zuurdeeg has not understood what Marcel means by "secondary reflection," that thought, which having used the tool of analysis, realises that there are certain areas of thought where purely analytic language cannot go without destroying the "relation" it seeks to establish. Zuurdeeg himself is slightly contradictory when he gives such a favourable place to Marcel in his volume and then he admits that Marcel's strong anti-metaphysical tendencies awaken him to the "illegitimate use of language".[46] After all, is it not this nondogmatic combination, of what is too severely analysed into analytic and convictional

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[44] Ibid., p.58.

[45] Ibid., p.264; c.f. p.267, where Zuurdeeg claims that the mixture of these two modes of thought causes Marcel to make a "metaphysical jump". This, in fact, is exactly what Marcel's type of thought seeks to avoid as much as possible. Zuurdeegs criticism is valid only if he can prove the complete distinction between analytical and evaluative language.

[46] Ibid., p.265.

language, which alerts Zuurdeeg to the fact that Marcel is "not 'just another metaphysician".[47] In fact, if Marcel had written two different kinds of essays, as Zuurdeeg suggests, the ring of sincerity in Marcel's writings would have been lost and analysts would have appreciated him only for his keen analysis, or, possibly, for his devoted faith.

With Zuurdeeg, as well as with Percy, there is a lack of appreciation of Marcel's contention that silence may be a positive virtue. Zuurdeeg would have liked Marcel to raise the question, 'Can man establish his own existence by speaking morally?'[48] I think Marcel would find this question of interest, but I doubt if he would insist on the "speaking" part to the exclusion of the being of the speaker involved. Marcel's suspicion of the dangers of language and his evaluation of the positive value of silence are too high to find it comfortable to ask the question in exactly this way.

Whether Marcel would agree that man can establish his existence through "speaking morally" is of prime interest to us. This remains to be seen.

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[47] Ibid. Zuurdeeg too easily mixes Marcel's religious and philosophical ideas.

[48] Ibid.

"Philosophy begins in wonder and, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains."
Alfred North Whitehead

CHAPTER III

ONTOLOGICAL MYSTERY

A. Preliminary Remarks

If Marcel's philosophy could be divided into the dualism of being and knowing, we might say that mystery is the object secondary reflection conceives. If this realist version were to be revised for a kind of Berkleyan monism--"to be is to be perceived"--mystery would, for all intents and purposes, be just another name for secondary reflection. Both versions are inaccurate. Marcel's view is rather that of a meta-realism. He does not deny the external distinction of known object and knowing subject; he insists, however, that there is an internal unity where the mystery of being is at the same time the goal of reflection and the ontological foundation which makes such thought possible. Marcel may say that for him "recollection and mystery are correlatives."[1] That is to say that a problem's aspect of mystery is not apparent except to the man capable of reflection.[2]

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[1] BH, p.113.
[2] BH, p.118.

Late in 1932, the insight, a "syneidesis,"[3] came to Marcel concerning the difference between problem and mystery. Perusal of previous writings will indicate that the notion of mystery was operative, though confused, at a much earlier time, as in the essay, "Existence et Objectivité" in a 1925 issue of Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale. Even earlier in the 18th to 22nd January, 1919, reflections recorded in the Journal Metaphysique, Marcel broadens the subject. He suggests that Jacques Maritain's Reflexions sur l'inteligence et sur sa vie propre, may have led him to the "fundamental distinction" between problem and mystery. The distinction received full-blown treatment in the significant essay, Position et Approaches concrètes de Mystère ontologique, written in 1933. Marcel observes that this elucidation came close on the heels of his reading of Karl Jaspers' Systeme de Philosophie, though he is uncertain whether that reading changed his own understanding of this issue.[4]

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[3] EBHD, p.79. "Syneidesis" is a term having its origins in Scholastic moral philosophy referring to the capacity to make synthetic moral judgements. It is apparently a developed capacity as opposed to an inborn ability, which might be designated by the term "synderesis". Here we see that the original insight of Marcel concerning problem versus mystery was assigned a moral appellation.

[4] C.f. EBHD, pp.80-83. Marcel hastens to add that neither strict Thomism nor Jacques Maritain's neo-Thomism influenced him in a major way. It is of incidental interest that Georges Bernanos, the French Catholic novelist, whom Marcel helped to notoriety through his published reviews, may have suggested the problem-mystery dichotomy in about 1927. Helmut Hatzfeld, Trends and Styles in Twentieth Century French Literature (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1957), p.172, notes this fact.

The notion of "mystery" may be said to be the prime philosophical principle in Marcel's thought. This proposal remains his most widely known contribution to thought.[5] The complementary distinction between abstract thought and concrete reflection provides the epistemological tool with which Marcel is able to make his investigations into the nature of reality. In such reflection death, hope, love, evil, freedom, etc., take on the form of mystery.

It is crucial for our purposes to recognise the centrality of morals in connection with this concept. It would probably be inaccurate to designate mystery as a "moral concept," but it is essential that the relationship between mystery and morals be recognised. This will be most clearly seen in some of the concrete illustrations.

B. Definition of Mystery

A mystery is by definition indefinable. The most concise attempt at definition of mystery is as follows: "A mystery is problem which encroaches upon its own data, invading them, as it were, and thereby transcending itself as a simple problem."[6] Marcel would now prefer to say that mystery is "a problem that encroaches on its own immanent conditions of possibility."[7] Put in other words,

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[5]A doctoral degree was awarded Sam Keen in 1962, at Princeton University, for a thesis on "The Idea of Mystery in the Thought of Gabriel Marcel." Thérèse Gingras discussed "Le Mystère de la Foi dans la Philosophie Existentielle de Gabriel Marcel" in a 1966 doctoral thesis at the Universite' de Montréal.

[6]PE, p.8; c.f. BH, p.100; also, c.f. MV, p.69.

[7]Quoted in Louis Pamplume, "Gabriel Marcel: Existence, Being and Faith," Yale French Studies, No. 12 (Fall-Winter, 1953), p.94, from unknown source in Marcel.

mystery is the kind of problem which by its own partially immanent, recalcitrant nature tends to drive us beyond the analysis of a set of conflicting circumstances "before me" to the recognition of a dilemma which is neither simply "before me" nor "within me".

The distinction of this so-called problem from other more straightforward types leads Marcel to speak of the "meta-problematical".[8] Most problems may be attacked by employing a certain technique. This is the way we employ the term "mystery" when speaking of thriller novels of the Sherlock Holmes variety. This other kind of mystery, however, is not susceptible to being solved by the compilation and codification of certain data by the use of learned techniques. We must resist the inevitable temptation to degrade mystery to the level of problem. This mystery may be said to be meta-technical or open only to the reflection which refuses to turn it into an object set over against it as an object to unravel.

A problem which is like a puzzle is capable of being grasped in the grip of technique.[9] Like a jig-saw puzzle, it will be solved when all the pieces are put into place. When that is accomplished we will have grasped the problem's solution. On the other hand, mystery disappears into thin air when it is approached in this fashion. It is of the very nature of mystery to defy the grasping action of the problematicising consciousness. Rather, mystery yields to a certain kind of recognition which may be described as a welcome.

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[8] BH, p.112, "Mystery is the Metaproblematic"; also, c.f. CF, pp.140-146.

[9] C.f. E.L. Mascall's Words and Images (London: Longman's, Green, 1957), p.76ff and A.M. Farrer's The Glass of Vision (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948), p.63f. These and others have been influenced by Marcel's notion of mystery.

To those who would respond that mystery is only another category of thought and itself problematical in the highest degree, Marcel answers quite categorically:

> To think, or, rather, to assert the meta-problematical is to assert it as indubitably real, as a thing of which I cannot doubt without falling into contradiction. We are in a sphere where it is no longer possible to dissociate the idea itself from the certainty or the degree of certainty which pertains to it. Because this idea is certainty, it is the assurance of itself; it is . . . something more than an idea.[10]

This approach is unique to Marcel. E.L. Allen suggests that Karl Jaspers makes something of this same distinction when he isolates object knowledge from that which transcends all knowledge.[11] Sam Keen suggests that when Marcel affirms that "authentic human life moves within the realm of mystery" he is saying "substantially the same" as Kierkegaard's dictum that "subjectivity is truth."[12] Both of these points have just enough truth

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[10] PF, pp.11-12. I fear that this assertion will hinder communication for those who are not acquainted with phenomenological philosophy. Marcel usually abjures such dogmatic statements for the sake of maintaining the dialogue.

[11] C.f. E.L. Allen's, Existentialism From Within (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p.149. I judge this to be a finally correct but superficial assessment. Hazelton correctly indicates that mystery is not limited to Jasper's "limit-situations," though I would edit that to say that Marcel sees the place of seeming contradiction as the place, not for an irrational leap, but for a renewal of thought in a new key; c.f. Hazelton, op.cit., p.158. There is a moral dimension then in Marcel's differentation which does not necessarily appear in Jaspers. Marcel himself makes this point in an essay which lauds Jaspers highly.

[12] Sam Keen, Gabriel Marcel (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1966), p.21. This fine brief study is written for the popular audience. For the careful researcher, "substantially" is the key word. For example, Marcel's inclusion of "intersubjectivity" in the region of mystery is foreign to Kierkegaard's notion of "subjectivity". Also, Marcel's emphasis on its intelligibility is not common to Kierkegaard's insight.

contained in them to make them subtle misdirections. Marcel stresses the moral side of the distinction more than Jaspers and the intellectual side more than Kierkegaard. Mystery is not a "given" in the traditional philosophical sense of that term. It is rather a "giving" which must be welcomed by the subject who would know it. This leads us to attempt to find an approach to mystery rather than to continue the futile attempt to adequately define it.

C. Approach to Mystery

This analysis indicates the importance of "concrete approaches" to mystery. We have already noted the inadequacy of the "grasping" example. There must be a passivity which is at the same time active. There must be a relaxation which is at the same time tension. There must be an attachment which is at the same time detachment.[13] Such paradox will appear impossible if viewed simply from the problematical level. But this apparent contradiction may be somewhat assuaged if we think of the way a good hostess combines these qualities when she welcomes guests to her home. For example, she is the passive one in the sense she is receiving the guests; she is also active in the sense that she "goes out of her way" to make them "feel at home".[14] The same illustration applies to the personal combination of relaxation-tension and attachment-detachment which she may achieve. Such an activity illustrates the proper approach to mystery.

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[13] This paradox will be stressed when we come to discuss secondary reflection in the next chapter.

[14] C.f. MBI, p.119. Marcel would compare this to the detachment of the saint, rather than the spectator.

It needs to be emphasized that mystery is open to the penetration of human comition.[15] Secondary reflection is definitely an act of the intellect, though not of the intellect apart from the other facets of man. Marcel says that he does not want to be known as an "irrationist," because he does not believe he is or ever has held such ground.[16] It is significant that Marcel calls mystery the "realm of the meta-problematic". Though mystery transcends the merely problematic on every side, it never completely loses the aspect of a problem. Thus, the reflection which approaches mystery never may be called noncognitive. The noncognitive approach would equate mystery with the unknowable or the currently unknown and make mystery only a residual problem. Marcel's basic metaphor of "light" indicates that mystery deepens with knowledge rather than lessens.

Marcel admits that the approach to mystery has its limitations, i.e., "its own dissatisfaction with any results it can achieve." The greatness of scientific thought is that the scientist is lifted out of himself in what we may with precision call "ecstacy". Theoretically, at least, he can be satisfied at the conclusion of his research. The philosopher remains an itinerant, a refugee from the ease of concluded research. This does not mean he is a fugitive from the homeland of thought. Indeed, it means the opposite. He must "reflect deeply" where the intellect seldom goes. His task is to "establish the conditions of primary reflection of scientific thought and of the more

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[15] C.f. BH, p.115 and PE, p.8. This emphasis distinguishes mystery from the mystic element.

[16] DW, p.vii.

mechanical operations of the understanding." This activity ends with the exigence that drove it forth, yet its going forth has not been in vain. The difference between the scientist and the philoso·her is this: For the scientist "the self has, in so far as it possibly can, vanished away." The philosopher, on the other hand, seeks an "insight which has essentially nothing to do with the objective as such".[17]

Something of the same conception of mystery may be found in Paul Tillich's writing.[18] Tillich distinguishes between the detached, scientific approach to knowledge which he calls "controlling reason" and the attached cognitive process which he names "receiving knowledge". Both include emotion, though the first tries to subdue it as much as possible. The two together may be called "understanding". Three movements--romanticism, philosophy of life, and existentialism--have tried to resist the encroachment of "controlling reason" on all levels of life but after initial successes all three have "lost out in the long run because they count not solve the criterion of the false and the true." Seemingly, existentialism must transcend itself by turning to "ask the question of revelation," a revelation which "claims to create a union with that which appears in revelation." This revelation is "receiving knowledge in its fulfillment," without losing

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[17] C.f. MBI, pp.215-216 for the quoted material in this paragraph.

[18] Bernard Martin in The Existentialist Theology of Paul Tillich (New York; Bookman Associates, 1963), p.187n, drew my attention to this intimate connection. Tillich gives only slight notice to Marcel's philosophy.

its ability "to satisfy the demands of controlling knowledge, of detachment and analysis."[19]

Certainly there is an obvious kinship in Tillich's and Marcel's thought on this head. Even the minor differences seem to illustrate the similarity: (1)Tillich remains more inclined to stress the objectivity of "receiving knowledge" than is Marcel to emphasize the objectivity remaining in "secondary reflection".[20] This is largely a matter of emphasis. (2)While for Tillich's system it appears that "receiving knowledge" is a legitimate tool in the philosopher's store, in Marcel's nonsystem the approach of "secondary reflection" to mystery is also part of a crusader-like mission against scientific thought to "demonstrate" that the refusal to treat relational problems as merely subjective is illegitimate.[21] The difference here

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[19]Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol.I (Welwyn: James Nisbet, 1953), pp.105-117. Tillich compliments Marcel and Heidegger for moving behind the nominalist-realist controversy to "being," Vol.II, p.12.

[20]Supra, previous paragraph. C. W. Kegley and R. W. Bretall, in The Theology of Paul Tillich (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p.114, see Marcel's attempt to think metaphysically by taking account of the "existential element" as one of the "most promising developments in recent philosophy." They ask: Why does a theologian such as Tillich allow the "philosophical element" but refuse to allow that philosophy to incorporate the "personal element into his reflection, while remaining a philosopher." Marcel would ask the same question.

[21]Cf. "BII, p.62, for example.

may be nothing other than a certain fervour of presentation common to Marcel as over against Tillich's reserve. (3)The use of the term "revelation" causes some confusion. While for Tillich mystery and revelation seem to be exactly equivalent terms, in Marcel revelation, while being a closely connected term, refers to the "source" of the light which illumines the mystery of our existence.[22] It would seem that Marcel would like to reserve the term revelation to be used only as a certain facet of the ontological mystery--the source. The very hesitancy of this approach to revelation elucidates the fact that while Tillich attempts to be a philosophical-theologian, Marcel remains with the philosophical question. Marcel seems to sense that a position like Tillich's calls him to be a theological philosopher--a position Marcel seems to regard as highly precarious. Yet, it should be admitted that the distinction Marcel makes is itself rather precarious to hold.

Marcel has rightly been named a "mysterious empiricist,"[23] though this nomenclature needs interpretation. Marcel certainly does attempt to draw upon the maze of our experience in order to discover the secrets of human existence. To this normal approach of the empiricist, however, must be added the recognition that I am involved in this research in a way which colours the whole range of my investigations. This recognition of envolvement brings problem to the meta-problematical level and, in so doing, opens up a new realm of knowledge in our experience.

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[22]This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

[23]F.H. Heinemann, Existentialism and the Modern Predicament (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), p.149. Heinemann believes that Ruggerio is mistaken and that Marcel remains this side of mysticism. Unaccountably, he regrets this.

This recognition is necessary to, not an escape from, the knowing process. Keen comments:

> To the degree that we acknowledge the mysterious interpretation between mind and body, self and world, person and person, believer and God, we deepen our participation in relationships which clarify and illuminate the meaning of human existence.[24]

D. Mystery and Mysticism

Whether Marcel is in the mystical tradition is subject to debate. For example, the notion has been variously interpreted, making its application difficult. Ian W. Alexander, on French phenomenology, seems uncertain. Speaking of phenomenology in general and Marcel in particular, he settles for the answer that this philosophy is "both descriptive science and a mystic search"; a science in that it is descriptive, a mystic search in that it points to the transcendent realm.[25] Yet at an earlier time, Alexander had claimed that Marcel's thought was "non-mystic," that indeed it was "refractory to mysticism". Alexander described his thought at that time as "reflective participation" which recognized the element of "distanz" at the heart of mystery.[26] In this earlier assessment, it seems to me that he was closer to the truth which Marcel both claims and exemplifies.

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[24] Keen, op.cit., pp.21-22.

[25] "The Phenomenological Philosophy in France: An Analysis of its Themes, Significance and Implications," Currents of Thoughts in French Literature, Anon, ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p.350.

[26] Review of Mystery of Being, Vol. I, Philosophical Quarterly, Vol.II (January, 1952), p.96.

It must be admitted, however, that there is further diversity of opinion on this matter. Taking a rather jaundiced view of Marcel, after some initial interest, R.D. Cumming says of the essays published under the title, Men Against Humanity, that he is "unable to come to grips with the soft texture of Marcel's present thought." This would seem to indicate that Cumming sees Marcel as moving toward a more mystical presentation. Cumming complains that Marcel has lost the knack of tackling problems and has allowed his thought to be "dissolved into mysterious atmospheric effects".[27]

Some agree in this evaluation of the so-called mystical nature of Marcel's thought.[28] Others contend that all existentialism must either transcend itself in a sort of mysticism or die the death of Sartrean despair.[29] This would tend to be supported by those who suggest that there is a close relatedness of thought between some Eastern religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, and existentialism.[30] It is significant for this treatment,

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[27] Cumming, Review of Mystery of Being, Vol.II, etc., loc. cit. Supra, note 72 in chapter on "Philosophical Method".

[28] Robert M. Kunz, Review of Troisfontaines' De l'existence a' l' Être, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol.15 (1954), pp.286-287.

[29] Wilmon Henry Sheldon, God and Polarity: A Synthesis of Philosophies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p.665; also, Ruggerio, op.cit., pp.43-44 agrees.

[30] T.M. Artingstoll, "Is Existentialism Buddhism?" The Hibbert Journal, Vol. LXIII (Autumn, 1964), pp.18-22. and E.L. Allen, Christianity Among the Religions (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), p.101.

however, that those who point to this relationship do so by showing how these Eastern religions are much less mystical than outsiders have been led to believe.[31] Also, my impression has been that those who desire to place this mystic label on Marcel do so on the basis of having observed certain superficial affinities rather than on the basis of close scrutiny and deliberation.

Only a cursory reading of Marcel will make him into a mystic. Reflection, we shall see, limits but does not deny reason. A thoughtful commentator on Marcel is correct when he claims that if the forced dichotomy between faith and knowledge were made concerning Marcel's notion of mystery that it would certainly fall on the side of knowledge.[32] Reflection causes one to enter into life, not withdraw from it. There is little of a mystical nature in Marcel's philosophy in the sense that it draws one away from the realism of this world. Rather, from childhood onward Marcel notes that there has been an "increasingly explicit refusal to abstract from all the concrete detail of my life."[33] Reflection leads to active, often verbal, expression. Mystery is something which demands expression, even though human language is always a weak vehicle to

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Roberts, op.cit., p.287.

[33] EBHD, p.20. Of course, if one defines mystical as "a venture of faith towards union with the depths of life," as Tillich says in "Existential Philosophy," Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol.II (January, 1944), p.67, then the estimate of Marcel as a "mystic" might be revised. But this is not a normal understanding of that term.

bear the weight of that testimony.[34] Reflection makes an escapist faith appear repellent. Marcel, to my knowledge, cannot be found to say anything particularly favourable to the mystical tradition in Roman Catholicism. In fact, in a relatively recent note he distinctly disassociates himself from the aberration of the mystical French sect known as the Jansenists.[35]

E. Concluding Statement

It will be crucial to see that the notion of mystery is a centred-in-man concept. Our definition alludes to its enveloping aspect. Like Kant, Marcel opposes all preceding rationalist and empirical schools. But whereas Kant stays with the object, Marcel seeks to enter the subject. Experience, far from being an incoherent chaos, from this perspective becomes centred in the experiencing subject. We thus penetrate our own experience by reflection. This opens to us the multi-dimensional aspects of our experience. This is best seen in the incarnational fact of our existence; that is, in the relation of myself to my body. Reflection shows that Descartes' problematisation of this relationship was not true to the concrete facts of life. This so-called problem at the centre of my existence is a prime example of the mystery that envelopes us.[36]

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[34] PE, p.67ff. These pages remind us of Marcel's cautious respect for language.

[35] He notes that he may have aroused misinterpretation by unwitting remarks, but he says that he regards mysticism as a form of "escapism," MAH, p.97.

[36] The "I-body" problem will be discussed in a later chapter.

Marcel has sought to give expression to an insight into the mystery of existence not of just one man, but which is "universal"--not in the sense of being "world-wide" but in the sense of being "open to all". Detachment, as in the case of the hostess, does not enable us to verify mystery but it does provide the perspective which makes an intelligible description possible. Thus, it is correct to say, that "while it may seem str nge to speak of the knowledge of mystery, it is dangerous to deny that the word 'knowledge' applies here."[37] The intelligible nature of mystery must be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

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[37]Keen, op. cit., p.22. Marcel asserts that life is "intelligible solely as mystery". BH, p.21. Underlining mine.

"A man should think his life and live his thought."
Søren Kierkegaard

CHAPTER IV

SECONDARY REFLECTION

A. Preliminary Remarks

Gabriel Marcel's philosophy contains and exemplifies a certain epistomological approach. Most often it is referred to as "secondary reflection". When referring to the "ingathering" aspect of this stage of reason the term "recollection" is sometimes used. In all cases I would define this reflection as a human power of restoration which gains its footing in the midst of primary (scientific) analysis and rises above (transcends) that initial level of thought, regaining the unity implicit in given experience. This definition will be further elucidated.

Secondary reflection is completely grounded in the experience of my life. We shall discover this especially in moral experience. It is at another level than the cool, calculating analysis of the scientist. But it does not fall into the romantic categories of life versus theory. Theory need not always be assigned to the ivory-towered existence and human life need not always be associated with the pure spontaneity of animal life. Rather, reflection should be thought of as part of life;

indeed, the richer the experience of life the more it is connected with reflection.[1]

Experience may be said to have three levels in Marcel's hierarchy. First, the level of the given, as yet "unnamed and unnamable".[2] Second, the level of analysis or "scientific abstraction" from the given.[3] The third is the level of the "reconquered concrete".[4] This movement from awareness, to analysis, to secondary reflection is the full range of human experience as we know it. Notice that the concrete is not the given; it is the given, analysed and restored by re-collection, which may be called the "concrete reality".[5] It is this which philosophy should seek to understand and be.

Experience is not treated as a simple "given" by this "recuperative" power. This is the way primary reflection often treats it. But such examination treats my experience simply as a problem to be solved. Further contemplation may lead us to see that experience is a mystery into which I enter. Experience should be encountered as a "massive presence which is to be the basis of all our affirmation."[6] Marcel desires to be distinguished both

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[1] Cf. MBI, pp.80-82.

[2] MAH, p.119.

[3] MAH, p.119.

[4] MAH, p.119.

[5] Hocking, op.cit., pp.46-47 notes substantial agreement of Hegel, Husserl and Marcel on this point. It is possible that Hegel's is the prime influence on Marcel in this matter; c.f. MJ, pp.102 and 113.

[6] MBII, p.53.

from the often abstract "philosophy of idealism" and from the "extreme existentialism" of Sartre in his approach to experience. He says:

> All I wish to do is to assert the rights of a phenomenology in the light of which the primacy of experience over what could be called pure thought must be rigorously preserved.[7]

As with its correlative, mystery, we ought to be aware that secondary reflection occurs when there is a shock of recognition. Usually this occurs in the context of moral situations.

B. Contemplation

Marcel seems to regard "contemplation" as the equivalent of secondary reflection. He defines it as the "turning inwards of our awareness of the outer world."[8] Contemplation involves an "ingatheredness" of my resources to confront the "whatever" of my contemplation, which itself becomes in the process a "factor in the ingathering".[9] There is here a detachment which intends attachment. Participation, to be distinguished from immersion, occurs when

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[7]EBHD, p.96. Note juxtaposition of this quote with words about "recollection" and explicit statements about phenomenology. MBI, pp.88 and 94 falsify Herbert Spiegelberg's statements in The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p.435 that Marcel "never identified phenomenology with his Secondary Reflection." A careful study of Marcel's phenomenological analysis will indicate that he is engaged in what he calls "secondary reflection".

[8]MBI, p.126.

[9]MBI, p.126. It will be seen that Marcel emphasizes the will less than did Royce, for example.

the spectacle evokes an "inner meaning" making contemplation possible.

This condition is illustrated by Marcel in two similar examples: Primary reflection leads me to regard a certain person less highly than I did at first, especially in the light of some recent action. Further reflection, however, reminds me of a similar action by myself once upon a time. The self that at first seemed to have the power to condemn seems now to have lost that privilege. Though I may be left in a "mood of anguish," at least I have freed myself from the position of judge--a position which recollection showed to be unnatural for me.[10] Marcel notes that the Emperor Augustus goes through the same process in Corneille's tragedy Cinna; Augustus says: "Cease to complain, but lay thy conscience bare: One who spared none, how now should any spare?"[11]

That this contemplation is not a withdrawal from life seems plain enough. It is rather an entrance into the depths of the self by viewing the external circumstance of another. It seems to indicate that this contemplation is not an escape from life but rather a more profound encounter with it by making it a part of the inward life. For Marcel this entrance into contemplation reveals, not two or more selves, but different levels or "modalities" or "modulations" of the self life.[12]

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[10] MBI, p.80.

[11] Pierre Corneille, Cinna, Act IV, Scene 2, a drama from 1640 quoted in MBI, p.129. A similar situation may be seen in the parable of the "Unjust Steward" which Jesus told, Matthew 18:21-35. Note the centrality of the ethical here.

[12] MBI, p.131.

C. Memory

There is a strong connection between this "in-gathering" and what we should call "recollection" or memory. In fact, recalling is contemplation viewed in a certain historical way. It may be easier, as usual, to say what this recollection is not, in an effort to say what it is: It is not contemplation of a past object. Marcel said as early as 1919: "We must not identify memory with a collection or aggregate . . . It does not mean to re-read a note."[13] Neither can this be seen as a "dialectical movement" whereby one endeavors to "mirror oneself in the intelligible unity of subject and object."[14] This theme of German idealism is inappropriate since in turning to myself I discover that the self to which I turn becomes less and less myself. Further, this recollection is not an intuition per se. Of this it will be necessary to say more.

Recollection is the reliving of the past. It is possible to view this as my venture into my back garden and gathering stones previously piled there. It should at least be plain that these stones have a wider meaning for me if they are in my back garden and I put them there, than they do for a stranger who happens across my back fence. Marcel uses illustrations similar to this: A man sticks his hand in his pocket and discovers his watch is not in the usual place; another man comes to a familiar

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[13] MJ, p.164. Marcel's position on my relation to my own history will gain lucidity when seen in contrast to Sartre's position in a later chapter.

[14] PE, p.13.

river and the landmark bridge has been washed away; yet another man suddenly realises he has told his friend a lie.[15] In each case there is a sense of shock. Reflection takes hold: Where was the watch last? Find a ferryman. Should the lie go unadmitted? In my illustration, reflection might take place if I went into the back garden and discovered the stones missing from the spot where I had placed them. In one sense they are just stones--simple data--but they are more than that for me: they cost me a certain price; they were placed in my garden for a purpose I had decided upon; they involved me in the expended energy of loading and unloading. Thus, for me they have a new reality which goes beyond their simple objectivity. The outer spectacle has an inner meaning. In the reflections of the Metaphysical Journal, Marcel explains this reality:

> Notice . . . that between the perception of the object by a stranger, by no matter whom--and the memory its possessor has of it--we have to slip in as intermediary term the perception, with its memories, of the person who habitually lives with this object. The recollections bound up with the object are here incorporated with the perception itself, and form with it an entirely indivisible unity. Thus we have a synthesis of the images and the movements which form the deepest reality of the object, of the object considered as value and not simply as physical datum.[16]

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[15] C.f. MBI, pp.77-79. The moral issue arises in the last example especially.

[16] MJ, p.167. J. Quentin Lauer in The Triumph of Subjectivity (New York: Fordham University Press, 1958), p.63 says that Marcel is a "significant exception" to the phenomenologists who as a rule are not interested in history.

D. Participation

The above quotation leads us to see that secondary reflection can take place when I confer upon my experience the element of value. Indeed, this recognition is the recollection that my experience may be viewed as a gift. Now when I realise that my stones have seemingly disappeared I "get hold of myself". Yet it would seem that such a grip on myself may also, at times be called a relaxation. Marcel says; "The word means what it says--the act whereby I recollect myself as a unity; but this hold, this grasp upon myself, is also relaxation and abandon."[17]

Such a concept is not easy to hold. As we have noted previously, it seems paradoxical in nature. Recollection seems to be a detachment which is an attachment. It appears to be a removal which is a participation. It looks like a position which at the same time disavows any place of its own. It is a judgement which makes all judgement impossible. This paradox is possibly resolved when it becomes clear that recollection is a way, not an end--a source, not a content.[18] Marcel says:

> We must say . . . that recollection as a re-establishment of contact with the source emits an illumination . . . What seems to conform to the data of this experience . . . is the recognition that recollection bestows upon us certain resources for the exploration within ourselves that we have to make in the direction of what I have called plenitude, or the full life.[19]

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[17] PE, p.12.

[18] Supra, illustration of hostess in chapter on "Ontological Mystery".

[19] EBHD, p.88.

It would appear, then, that recollection operates upon experience which it considers valuable in a way that resolves the apparent distinction, on the problematic level, of the object and myself and moves in the direction of the solution along lines which are both old and new, faithful and creative. For example, in the illustration of the missing bridge, "reflection does really play the part of the ferryman."[20]

While secondary reflection may maintain a certain detachment, it is not the distant removal of the abstracting consciousness. It is not the abstraction of empiricists that insists on viewing my body, for example, as just one among many. It is rather an existential detachment which insists that there is an important clue to the business of knowing to be found in the events and persons which have been an intimate part of my experience and yet cannot be identified with what I am today--at least, not in any final sense.

E. Abstraction

But let us be clear. Marcel knows that abstraction or pure thought is a necessary part of the reflective process. He defines it as that thought which "clears the ground" by exempting certain elements from survey. Abstraction is the way we make contact with the most concrete realities. It enables us to overcome and grasp the massive confusion of the "immediately given."[21]

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[20] MBI, p.79.

[21] MAH, p.115. Marcel denotes the "given" as "so many still unseparated clots of matter," MAH, pp.119 ff.

It is the "spirit of abstraction" against which Marcel protests.[22] This spirit is not intellectual; it is motivated by the passion of resentment. It sees the whole world and its history through some narrow keyhole, e.g., a strict Marxist view of economics. It is, as the philosopher Baron Seilliere has noticed, "the transportation of the attitudes of imperialism to the mental plane." It is a reductive operation which claims "this is only that . . . this is nothing other than that." It makes the "illicit extrapolation" of using key terms such as "equality," as used in mathematics, in exactly the same way in the field of human relations. This spirit tends to "deny human reality and dignity" and to "replace human beings by abstract entities," e.g., the bourgeois or the proletariat. It performswhat might be called the "libel of labels". This spirit, Marcel claims, is directly opposite to careful scientific abstraction.[23]

Marcel claims there is a direct relation between the "spirit of abstraction" and the scourge of mankind, war. In the post-war anxiety of his Gifford Lectures, the particular relation of a certain perversity of thought and the tragedy of war dawned upon Marcel.[24] In an aside, he stated:

> I would like, in passing, to add that it is impossible not to ask oneself whether this almost complete vanishing away of the contemplative activity in

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[22] MAH, pp.115ff.

[23] MAH, pp.115ff.

[24] Professor Ian Henderson has focused my attention on the tense context, in terms of the international "cold war," in which these Gifford Lectures were prescribed.

> the modern world has not something, at least, to do with the terrible evils from which mankind is suffering; and it may be that the discovery of this connection between the presence of evil and the absence of contemplation will turn out to be the most important results of this volume and its successor.[25]

As a matter of fact, two of Marcel's later works, Le Déclin de la Sagesse and Les Hommes contre L'Humain, do take up this theme in its varied facets. It is in the latter work that Marcel makes the following profound analysis of the nature of evil:

> The fact is . . . that the element of resentment in human nature is profoundly linked to a tendency to conceptual disassociation in this, lying at the opposite pole to the element of admiration.[26]

It is here that Marcel's thought shows considerable consistency. (Though he remains open to criticism in that it remains nonsystematic.) Admiration is a mode of creativity.[27] To the extent that I refuse to accept my experience with gratitude, to that extent I enter into the resentment which leads to "conceptual dissociation". This abstraction which becomes a spiritual blindness or perversity is the equivalent of a "fanaticized consciousness" in Marcelian terms.[28]

It is here also that Marcel's thought shows signs of having significant practical meaning. If contemplation and peace are bound up together in creatively free life and

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[25]MBI, pp.122-23. Also, cf. MAH, pp.114ff.

[26]MAH, p.117.

[27]EBHD, p.126.

[28]MAH, pp.99ff.

if the "spirit of abstraction" and war are woven together in the same fabric, then a certain return to the reflective life is surely necessary. Marcel has usually been cautious about the prospect for such a renewal.

Marcel's effectiveness as a communicator has been limited in that he sometimes seems to carp unnecessarily against the scientific community. His sentiments and his illustrations are almost always joined to the artistic community. Also, he does not seem to have broadened his philosophy beyond a protest against the technological age, except to the extent that he has made his secondary reflection plain. It is true that Marcel himself has recognised this lack to an extent, but it remains true that Marcel has been remiss in working out the full implications of his notion of secondary reflection. If elaborated these lines of thought would begin to give us some insight into how man may live in a technological age and still manage to maintain a reflective balance. This is not precisely the purpose of this present effort. Rather we are more particularly concerned with the moral attitude achieved by a linking of life to contemplative thought. We return to this later.

F. Subjectivity

Obviously, the danger of Marcel's thought is that it will become over-balanced toward subjectivism. I think it fair to say that Marcel is usually quite conscious of this risk and takes pains to guard against falling into this trap. He does this by acknowledging that our thought of necessity is subjectively oriented but claiming that this is no reason for thought to become a "closed" approach to reality. Such a "closed" entrance may be called "subjectivism" in order to be distinguished from subjectivity.

Marcel might call it a "subjectivised consciousness".

It is at this point that one of Marcel's true strengths arises. For in Marcel, along with Jaspers, there is an understanding of "intersubjectivity" which does not seem to be revealed in Kierkegaard or Heidegger. It is this relation which is ontologically primary over my ontic isolation. "Esse est co-esse." The "we" is primary forthe "I". In a penetrating observation, a student of Marcel says:

> Auto-centrism inevitably objectifies me and exiles me from myself. In love, as the result of an inner reconciliation in which I find my concrete unity and become you for myself, the presence of another mediatises my own presence.[29]

Marcel says as much himself. The interhuman is an inevitable aspect of that "global awareness" which is my selfhood manifested. Noting that "the philosopher . . . has essentially nothing to do with the objective as such," he insists strongly "on the presence of one's self to itself, or on the presence to it of the other that is not really separable from it".[30]

It is secondary reflection that apprehends this unity, by refusing to allow the temptation to relapse into a problem-solving analysis, to hold sway. It refuses the extreme existentialist position that I have some special privilege or despair associated with my situation in life.

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[29] Pamplume, op.cit., p.97.

[30] MBI, p.216. Underlining mine.

The I-thou relation is, in its negative side, the refusal to tear the other apart in analysis. Love is not at its centre a judgement of the assets or defects of the other person; love is a full acceptance of the other person as himself. A love relationship that fails, even subconsciously, to comprehend this will be more liable to failure than an "illicit affair". Secondary reflection is this wisdom coming to light. Pamplume, commenting on Marcel's notion, says:

> Following its own vocation, metaphysical reflection becomes redeeming in the measure in which, orienting itself toward an epistemology of love, it delimits a 'logic of liberty.'[31]

Secondary reflection is transcendence over the forces that would simply psychologise, judge or separate. All these things are possible: It is within the range of possibility that an apparent martyrdom may rather be a pathological form of self-destruction. It is often the case that relationships of intimacy are maintained on the basis of objective judgements. Without doubt a certain kind of analysis may so delineate the intertwined strands of a relationship that nothing is left but a completely immanent thing. <u>But these are all forms of betrayal.</u> That is to say that an alleged I-thou relation is nothing but a subjective experience that happened to coincide in the other person. Secondary reflection is in this sense a refusal to succumb to temptation--the enticement of the "spirit of abstraction" in a scientific age. Equally it refuses to ignore the communal aspect of my life-thought.

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[31] Pamplume, <u>loc.cit.</u>

Marcel adds:

> The function of secondary reflection will consist essentially in demonstrating that the refusal [the refusal of love to treat itself as merely subjectivistic] is transcendent in relation to the criticism to which primary reflection would claim to subject us.[32]

If questioned, I have little doubt that Marcel would affirm that primary reflection is necessary and helpful. He would even say that it provides the footing upon which recollection rises. But the fact is, that in his effort to make secondary reflection feasible, he too easily denigrates the thought common to scientific investigation. This is a serious defect, if only for the image of Marcel's presentation, and the implications are, of course, more far reaching. What Marcel really should have emphasized, even more, is that it is subjectivism, not subjectivity, which is the real temptation, just as the "spirit of abstraction," not abstraction itself, is the real problem. It is abstractionism and subjectivism which are the opposites to be avoided at all costs. For Marcel there is little difference; both are closed approaches, differing only in their initial premise concerning my own subjectivity.

C. Intuition

It will be asked what relation this notion of secondary reflection bears to intuition. This is a natural question because of the subjective nature of this mode of thought. It is even more in order as a legitimate enquiry when we remember Bergson's strong influence on Marcel's

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[32] MBII, p.62.

philosophy. This matter may be solved, though not without some difficulty, owing in part to the vacillation of Marcel's language on this subject.

It is clear that Marcel has never accepted Bergson's notion of intuition at face value. In 1929 he published an article in which Bergson's theory that intuition was "self-warranting" was denied, but which pointed toward a certain kind of reflection which might "confirm" the value of the intuition.[33] The analysis of the observer, J.O. Urmson, is somewhat the same, though he relates Marcel to Maritain, no doubt because of Marcel's French Roman Catholic connection. He reports that Marcel has "remained aloof" from "Maritain's neo-Thomism," finding that "ontological intuition was chimerical and inadequate."[34]

It seems clear that Marcel accepts no simple notion of intuition. Neither does he repudiate the notion entirely. Secondary reflection seems to be a working out by human means what comes to us as a "blinded intuition"; it is "not something that lies at our disposal, something we have, but rather it is a source, in itself inaccessible, from which we set out to think."[35] Marcel acknowledges that there is doubtless a "supra-reflective unity" which we vaguely intuit at the point where reflection asks itself how it can operate at all.[36] Marcel says:

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[33]EBHD, p.35.

[34]"Gabriel Marcel," The Concise Encyclopedia of Philosophy and Philosophers. (London: Hutchinson, 1960), p.247.

[35]MJ, p.X; also c.f. BH, p.120.

[36]MBI, p.38.

> Rather than to speak of intuition in this context, we should say that we are dealing with an assurance which underlies the entire development of thought . . .[37]

It appears that intuition is what makes all thought possible--primary and secondary reflection. It is the context in which the knowing activity operates. It is not any content itself: "To be told of an intuitive knowledge of being is like being invited to play on a soundless piano."[38] Intuition would appear to be the source of all rationality. It is, however, more closely connected to secondary reflection in that it is the place where reflection ceases to reflect upon itself short of an infinite regression.

We must ask about the relation of "blinded intuition" to revelation. For Marcel, revelation is what might be called intuition's indirect cause. I base this conclusion mainly on an early statement:

> An ontology with this orientation is plainly open to a revelation, which, however, it could not of course either presuppose or absorb, or even absolutely speaking understand, but the acceptance of which it can in some degree prepare for. To tell the truth, this ontology <u>may</u> only be capable of development <u>in fact</u> on a ground previously prepared by revelation.[39]

This statement fits well with what is said in other places about metaphysical intuition. Intuition is no simple datum and it is no subjective vision. It has a relation to me which is analogous to my body's adherence to me. In

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[37] PE, p.14.

[38] PE, p.14.

[39] BH , p.120; also, c.f. PE, p.31.

other words, intuition is an idea closely involved with Marcel's understanding of mystery. Intuition speaks of the nonmanufactured nature of the mystery; revelation refers to the theological element as a crucial factor in that situation. Intuition differs from mystery then in referring to a specific phenomenological aspect of that mystery. Revelation is also mysterious, but of a different order, to which the ontological mystery only obliquely points.

H. Philosophy and Theology

What then is the relation between the philosopher and the theologian? This is not easily answered. Zuurdeeg accuses Marcel of an unacceptable mixture of analytical and convictional language.[40] Isolated, the two types of language may have their own power, but together they tend to nullify each other. As Zuurdeeg says:

> What we do reject . . . is the method of suggesting that specific convictions . . . are supported by, made plausible by, authenticated by, the analysis which preceded them in the essay.[41]

D.M. MacKinnon asserts that in Marcel's work "the frontiers are blurred between ethical reflection, metaphysics, and spirituality."[42] MacKinnon sees this characteristic, however, as a "strength," since the issues are not simply ones of philosophical debate or religious affirmation, but ones of life."[43]

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[40] Supra, note 41 in chapter on "Philosophical Language".

[41] Zuurdeeg, op.cit., p.264.

[42] BH, p.2. This is to be found in the helpful preface which D.M. Mackinnon contributes to this volume.

[43] BH, p.2.

It seems to me that Zuurdeeg has missed the point of secondary reflection. Certainly Marcel does not try to straddle the fence of philosophy and theology as does Tillich. Also, it is clear that the first series of lectures in the Gifford Lectures, on the matters of reflection and mystery, do not, except on rare occasions, invoke theological language. Indeed, when Marcel uses a word that hints of theological significance he usually notes that he is using it in a nontheological way, e.g., incarnation. He usually goes on to explain that distinction in each case. Secondary reflection, however, is by definition open to any insight from which light seems to emanate. If this seems to come from Christian sources one cannot simply object on secular dogmatic grounds, but one must proceed with the caution appropriate to careful reflection.

I doubt if it is best to say that in Marcel's thought the "frontiers are blurred" between theology and philosophy. It seems to me that this actually happens only if you follow Marcel to the end of his thought, where there appears more of a transition than a blurring. (Of course, it must be admitted that the end is in some sense a reclamation of the origin of the thought, but the point is that it is never a simple reclamation; it is more like the final reconciliation of seemingly clashing themes in a musical symphony--a reuniting that reasserts the primary theme, but not in any simplistic way, since the antithetical elements have added a new dimension to our appreciation.)

Marcel's reflection operates in the "twilight".[44]

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[44] C.f., MBI, p.76.

This is not a half-light which it seeks to produce by confusing the issues. The life of man is caught in the twilight which makes light or darkness distinct possibilities. The task of secondary reflection is to move toward the light. To the extent that this philosophical thought operates in the light which indirectly shines from revelation, as such, that thought approaches--moves purposely towards--that reflection. The disciplines are not crossed except as life itself seems to blur them. Philosophy and theology maintain their own ground. Truth may be one, but in "le monde casse" it may strain thought and language to the breaking point if one seeks to demonstrate this.

I think Pamplume has said it most clearly in considering this issue. He says that for Marcel philosophy and revelation retain their independence. Philosophy, however, may depend on a "fecund irradiation" of revelation. Marcel in the "intimate connection of incarnation and transcendence" opens a road so that revelation as such retains its "supernatural character" and yet may come to have some "metaphysical plausibility". Philosophy may be said to "foreshadow" faith to some extent.[45]

I. Reflection and Faith

Certainly the idea of secondary reflection is open to criticism from all sides. It may appear to be a subtle Christian mieutic. Ruggiero protests concerning the alleged probing and hesitant nature of Marcel's thought that "Marcel knows from the beginning where he wantsto arrive,

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[45]Pamplume, op.cit., p.100.

and, seeking he has the air of a man who has already found."[46] But this is to totally misunderstand, and appear not to have read the diary probings of Marcel's thought. This judgement is denied by the enigmatic character of the conclusions in many of Marcel's plays. It is rather that secondary reflection has led Marcel to affirm that what he finds seems to have been indirectly given in the first place. There is a circularity in much of the reflective process but this is not the intention that drives it on. To imply that Marcel's thought is primarily a Christian apologetic is to forget that he did not come to terms with the Church until the age of forty--a time when his reflections were already far advanced.

Secondary reflection itself helps us to understand the criticism of thinkers like Ruggiero. In a philosophy in which reflection bears a close resemblance to prayer it is inevitable that some will judge this to have been the author's intention. That this conclusion may be accurate, who can finally deny? But let it also be agreed that this is not the only possibility. It is at least worthy of consideration that the philosopher has discovered a philosophical method which, in a rather coincidental way, seems to allign itself with religious insight. The conclusion may then be that this conjunction is not simply a coincidence after all. Marcel admits that the conjunction is not entirely coincidental, since the philosopher must survey all of man's experience, including his religious experience. But the intention to develop a philosophy which is merely a Christian apologetic has not been the driving force in Marcel's achievement. Yet even

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[46] Op.cit., pp.40-41.

this conclusion is tempered by a further insertion of secondary reflection--a reflection which seems unable in itself to finally judge the other person. Such judgement must remain tentative, even if we have to act on the half-light we can gather.

In the second series of Gifford Lectures, Marcel speaks of the relation between thought and faith. He says:

> There are times when my own faith seems to me like a stranger: there is a gap between the believing or praying me and the reflecting me.[47]

This gap is an essential part of myself. But, reflected upon, this gap tends to disappear. It is not synthesized in the Hegelian manner or even resolved in something like a perfect chord but there may be a "certain harmony" or "modus vivendi," between the praying and reflecting me. The believer must take up the task and test of reflection in order to give an apology for his faith and to remove the abstractness of it for himself. Reflection becomes the medium for the purification of faith.[48]

It would appear that Marcel is saying that faith does not fear examination. Not that doubt is to be eschewed. Doubt is the "gap" which makes faith a real quality rather than a play-thing. The revelation which faith confirms is not a "given" in the ordinary sense, but from the stance of faith, purified by reflection, it claims the place of an undeniable reality.

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[47] MBII, p.126.

[48] MBII, pp.126-127.

J. Concluding Statement

We are brought to the consideration of the relation of secondary reflection to ontological mystery. Reflection is motivated by the "unease" which accompanies the presence of mystery.[49] Expressed in dualistic terms, reflection is the existemological process that is able to apprehend the metaphysical reality of mystery; but this is highly inadequate since the presence of mystery is as much a causative factor as it is the thing grasped. This is even less adequate, for we are beyond the pole of cause and effect conceptions.[50] In "mystery" we are not a given datum; it can never be thought of as something to be grasped, except when we are objectifying it in an inappropriate way. We should rather say that the reflective power enables us to freely turn toward the mystery that is already surpassing all that we know about it. Negatively, it is the refusal to allow the presence of mystery to be treated in simplistic problematic terms. Reflection is thus the expression of a freedom which seems at once to be the gift which mystery brings and the response we offer its presence.

(It is at this point that I must agree with Marcel, following Bergson's lament, that language is constructed to enable the subject-object relation to be clarified and remains a highly inadequate tool for the research of the philosopher into the concrete range of metaphysical reality.)[51]

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[49] BH, p.122.

[50] C.f. the essay "God and Causality" in Religion and Culture: Essays in Honour of Paul Tillich. Walter Leibrecht, ed., trans. Robert W. Flint (London: SCM Press, 1959), pp.211-216.

[51] EBHD, p.77. Supra, note 8 in chapter on "Philosophical Language".

Secondary reflection for Marcel is more than a luxury. There is an intimate relation between the development of such a philosophical frame of mind and the continuation of society on a high level. Marcel believes that to the extent that a philosopher fails in this he falls away from his true mission which is to defend man from himself in a technological age.[52] To the extent Marcel fails to make secondary reflection clear he hangs precariously on the brink of mysticism or secularised forms of irrationalism. To this writer the effort represents a significant exploration into the relation between intellectual integrity and the life of faith. It would appear that this cohesion is achieved through the "shock of recognition" which occurs when one is enveloped in a moral situation--which Marcel seems to contend is a universal aspect of man's existence.[53]

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[52] MAH, p.98 and pp.194ff.

[53] To my knowledge only two students of Marcel suggest the importance of the moral dimension in relation to the correlatives of mystery and secondary reflection. Ralph Harper, The Sleeping Beauty (London: The Harvill Press, 1955), pp.48-50, suggests that mystery is to be found in the moral dimension. A.O. Schmitz, in his unpublished doctoral thesis from the University of North Carolina in 1964, titled, The Dialectic of Mystery, is explicit. He makes much of this relation. He asserts: "Marcel's basic insight lies in the realization that in moral judgement . . . there occurs an experiential concentration toward the self." p.222.

"The moment I treat my body as an object of scientific knowledge, I banish myself to infinity."

Gabriel Marcel

CHAPTER V

UNITARY EXISTENCE

A. Preliminary Remarks

"Incarnation--the central 'given' of metaphysic."[1] This down-to-earth remark from 1927 or 1928 gives indication of the concrete type of reflection which has constantly engaged Marcel's attention.

The desire for a certain footing for philosophical reflection has the respectability of hoary tradition, going back to the so-called indubitable *cogito ergo sum* of René Descartes (1596-1650). The intention to keep thought close to human life stems from Marcel's insistence that too soon philosophy falls away into abstract statements. There is obviously a refusal to remain bound to the limited propositions of scientific philosophy.

The remarks which follow are intended to convey, with critical attention, the mystery of my relation to my body as elaborated in Marcel's philosophy.

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[1] BH, p.11. Marcel says, "The fundamental datum of all metaphysical reflection is that I am abeing who is not transparent to himself, that is to say, my being is to me a mystery." This from diary notes in MJ, p.290, dated 25 October, 1922; also, c.f. CF, p.93.

B. Subject-Object Relation

Numerous variations on the relation of mind to body have been suggested and elaborated in the history of philosophy. Marcel has noticed most of these.

Mind Over Matter. It seems entirely possible for me to treat my body as the tool belonging to myself. As a matter of fact, this approach has been advocated by the theoretician and put into practice by the man-on-the-street. This is to make the subject-object distinction reminiscent of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and such followers as Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). But further reflection shows Marcel the difficulty with that position.[2] It is a philosophical commonplace, since the rediscovery of Kierkegaard, to warn against the dangers of objectification. Marcel's thoughts on this point parallel those of Kierkegaard, though they were developed apart from his direct influence, whose thought he knew little about until well into the third decade of this century.

A logical objection to this theory of reality was noted by Marcel on the 24th October, 1920:

> If I think of my body as instrument I thereby attribute to the soul, whose tool it is, the potentialities which are actualized by means of this instrument. Nor is that all. I furthermore convert the soul into a body and in that way become involved in regression without end.[3]

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[2] C.f. MJ, p.287, where Marcel says that the "subject-object distinction does not account for experience any more than the theory of an 'intelligible unity'." At this point he calls for an "irrational unity," or one, at least, that is "in some way unthinkable". This rather rash language obscures the fact that Marcel has been at pains to describe this unity.

[3] MJ, p.246.

This logical objection is instructive. It seems a telling blow to the idealist position. Marcel has repeated this "regression" ad infinitum notion several times since.[4] Thus, Marcel discovers a logical protest parallel to and possibly accountable for, a feeling of "uneasiness" I have when "the mind entertains the formulae of instrumentalism."[5]

There are two limiting cases in Marcel's view which show the inadequacy of the instrumental position. First, Marcel observes how contrary to this conception it is when "my body" is jolted out of the "everyday atmosphere" by being subjected to illness and suffering. When in such a case, the doctor treats "my body" as an "apparatus" or the priest treats it as a "trial or tribulation inflicted by God," I am for both of them reduced to the state of a "machine".[6] Again, when the "emancipated girl" tells her parents that "her body belongs to her, that she can do what she pleases with it," the shock may come when her "imperfectly controlled" body subverts her and "she finds herself pregnant."[7]

Marcel does not deny the appeal of the instrumental view of mind over body. It is true that he is ill-advised to treat the doctor's action as being equally objectionable to the approach of the priest in the above illustrations.

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[4]MJ, p.333, CF, pp.18-19, EBHD, p.45, MBI, p.100. Marcel acknowledges that it was a pedagogical error for him to use the term "soul"; c.f. MBII, p.34 and EBHD, p.45.

[5]MJ, p.333.

[6]MBI, pp.209-210.

[7]EBHD, pp.98-99.

Yet the point is well made. There is, phenomenologically speaking, an artificiality about treating my body merely as an object to be used. There is here a failure to take experience seriously. Added to this is the logical difficulty of reflecting on a body directed by a self, which thus objectified, requires its own master and so on indefinitely.

Is Marcel merely giving a phenomenological description or is he denying the metaphysical reality of this idealist position? This is a question Marcel would not answer with simple directness. He certainly seems to say that the illustrations of the limiting cases show that this instrumental theory is not universally applicable and, hence, suffers from being, at the very least, a vast oversimplification of the "relation" I have to my body. He, in fact, is saying much more. He regards the question itself as faulty, purely hypothetical and full of temptation.[8]

Mind Over Mind. Though influenced by the absolute idealists, G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1801) and F.H. Bradley (1846-1924), Marcel early began to disengage himself from that sort of abstraction.[9] Marcel reacts against

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[8] EBHD, p.47.

[9] Hocking, op.cit., p.445. It should be noted that Marcel probably understands Hegel better than did Kierkegaard. Hocking says that Marcel's yardstick of "concreteness" is better able to cope with Hegel since Marcel appreciates Hegel's attention to the concrete as well as the universal categories. In the Metaphysical Journal, Hegel is discussed often in both affirmative and negative fashion. Kierkegaard remained only a name at that time. In MAH, pp.1-2, Hegel is praised for his attention to the concrete; Marcel says that no philosopher has protested more strongly "the confusion of the concrete with the immediately given".

"[Johann Gottlieb] Fichte [(1762-1814)] and the Romantics," who had to "transcendentalize" the self in order to have the "universal principle" and in so doing, lost the "empirical self".[10] On the other hand, Marcel denies that his position tends toward a monistic view, leading eventually to pantheism. In pungent terms he said in the Gifford Lectures:

> It is well to reject once and for all and in the strongest terms, the idea that in order to avoid pantheism it is necessary to cling to the idea of a human person as rigidly circumscribed as possible.[11]

The last part of that quotation shows Marcel opposed to the later idealists, the personalists, because as he earlier had said, "the person is not and cannot be an essence" and "any metaphysics which is somehow established apart from . . . essences, is in danger of collapsing like a house of cards."[12]

It may be sufficient to say that from the first Marcel has moved away from the notion of personality as the key to reality, and, yet, he has been too intently concerned with the existing person to allow a "universalized mind" to hold that place in his philosophy.

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[10] QEBHD, p.101.

[11] MBII, p.35. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) said that the body itself is really mind. This "spiritualist hypothesis" is anathema in Marcel's view.

[12] CF, pp.114-115. We shall encounter later Marcel's similar objection to a philosophy of value per se, since such affirmations are without ontological foundation. This particular position on personalism probably indicates one of the places where he diverges from a contemporary such as Emmanuel Mounier.

Mind and Matter. There seems to be no strong advocacy of the idea of matter and mind in the history of philosophy. The notion of "psycho-physiological parallelism," however, has received attention. Marcel criticizes the refutation of parallelism in Bergson as "timid" and unable to give an improved account for the duration of memory.[13] Recollection cannot conserve itself; thus "the motionless memory of Bergson is a pure abstraction."[14] Nor does Marcel think this tentative position is only a minor fault; as early as the 13th April, 1915, he said that "the mysterious relation between the internal and external is perhaps a centre . . ."[15]

Marcel's generally favourable account of Jaspers' attempt to come to grips with reality singles out this key fault: By staying with the subject-object relation of Kant, Jaspers has failed, in spite of "heroic effort," to transcend the "enclosed space" of this world. Marcel says that "what we have here after all is a psycho-physiological dogmatism."[16]

Thus, Marcel sees in Bergson and Jaspers, two philosophers who have his highest admiration, a finally inadequate attempt to come to grips with the existence of man while still operating in the essential subjective-objective framework of post-Kantian idealism.

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[13] MJ, pp.130-131.

[14] MJ, p.150.

[15] MJ, p.130.

[16] CF, p.253. Marcel also identifies Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) in this category and notes the rather similar alternative which he calls Bergson's "psycho-physical interactionism", MBI, p.94.

Matter Over Matter. Marcel gives fleeting notice to the strict materialist position. Yet he is less hard on this position than on that of the idealists. He says he has "repudiated everything resembling or in any way connected with materialism," but he admits in the same context that his rejection of a dualistic man leaves him in a precarious state.[17] Marcel admits that as long as the question is "of knowing with what things [men] are made," the materialists carry the day, since the idealists have to posit a "soul" of "immaterial matter".[18] He even admires the materialist's attempt--"though an unfortunate effort"--to protest against "the purely instrumentalist notion" of my relation to my body.[19] But in Marcel's terms, to simply identify myself with a body, per se, is to deny my very existence.

C. Unique Being

In the end, because they seek to establish my wholeness in terms of relationship of one "thing" to another--either by giving precedence to the one with the consequent tendency to obliterate the other side of the relation, or by a position of parallel entities--the traditional positions fail in Marcel's view.

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[17] CF, p.169. He suggests that Maine de Biran (1766-1824), Charles Péguy (1873-1914) and Paul Claudel (1868-1955) and much Catholic philosophy points the way out of this dilemma.

[18] MJ, pp.90-91.

[19] MJ, p.333.

Marcel attempts to establish the premises of a concrete philosophy which take account of an apparent dualism in man but go beyond it by explaining "the relation" in terms of mystery. He says:

> There are two inversely related positions which the mind is in danger of oscillating between like a pendulum . . . given that relations can only exist between terms . . .[20]

He adds in a later essay:

> Whatever the great majority of philosophers of the various schools have thought, this relation is not a datum which is definable in an objective, univocal way, as it would be if it were reducible to a causal relation, or to a parallelism, or again as it would be on a monist, materialist, or spiritualist hypothesis.[21]

I Exist! In the now famous essay in 1925, which appeared in the Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale, Marcel made a clear distinction between existence and objectivity. This fundamental divergence appears in less clear form in the earlier Journal notes, of which this essay is a sort of summary. This schema breaks down the necessity of establishing the relation between two more or less identifiable quids.

Marcel discusses this question more or less lucidly in several places.[22] The finest statement of the issues

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[20] CF, p.23.

[21] CF, p.101. Underlining mine.

[22] C.f. MJ index under "body"; also, c.f. CF, pp.11-37, BH, pp.9-40 and pp.145-174 and passim. Richard K. Ullmann in Between God and History (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), p.9, says that Gabriel Marcel has shown "most clearly" among modern thinkers that the person is indivisible. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's reputation would challenge this perhaps.

appears in the first series of the Gifford Lectures. He explains it in words something like the following: The primary question is this: "Who am I?" Paradoxically I appear to myself as a "somebody and not a somebody".[23] In other words, I can treat myself as a stranger, as an intimate friend and in many intermediate ways. In the case of the seeming intimate relation with myself, can I say that this self exists? According to the usual meaning of the term "exist," the answer must be "no". Marcel regards Kant's Critique of Pure Reason as a death-dealing blow to the notion of existence as a predicate of some "I". Indeed, he regards the question itself as "vicious" since it misconstrues the "I" into a "that" when the "I" is the very negation of a "that". The "I exist" must be seen together. Marcel says:

> If therefore the 'I exist' can be taken as an indubitable touchstone of existence, it is on condition that it is treated as an indissoluble unity: the 'I' cannot be considered apart from the 'exist'.[24]

But this "I exist" is not "pure existence". The Latin prefix of "exist" is significant. The "ex" means "out, outward, out from". To say "I exist" is to say "I am manifest". It is to say: "I have something to make myself known and recognized both by others and by myself, even if I wear borrowed plumes."[25] Marcel says emphatically: "Existence and the exclamatory awareness of existence

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[23] MBI, p.86.

[24] MBI, p.90.

[25] MBI, p.91; supra, notes 12 and 13 in chapter on "Philosophical Language".

cannot be really separated."[26] This he often refers to as "global awareness".

Rejecting the instrumentalist formula, "I have my body," Marcel affirms the formula: "I am my body."[27] This formula has only negative significance, however, in that it guards us from idealist theories. Materialism too is avoided when I note that this is not said in a univocal way. We are led then to a definition of "incarnate being".

> To be incarnated is to appear to oneself as a body, as this particular body, without being identified with it nor distinguished from it--identification and distinction being correlative operations which are significant only in the realm of objects.[28]

Existence versus Objectivity. This definition of "incarnate being," carried out in the Gifford Lectures, is based on reflections first essayed in the Journal Metaphysique

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[26] MBI, p.91; also, c.f. MBI, p.111 where Marcel speaks of the "Oh" or "Ugh" of existence; also, MBII, p.56 on the subject of names as a certain manifestation. Marcel plainly diverges from Zuurdeeg's position that the spoken word is the vital key to existence, CF, p.172. It should be noted here, however, that Marcel and the analysts are not completely separated. As we have indicated in a previous chapter Marcel admits that there is often a link between existence and its enunciation. But Marcel believes that the increase of beaurocracy, causing our talk to be "measured and restrained," means that "between ourselves and existence we are imposing thicker and thicker screens," p.91. As we have noted, supra, note 44 in chapter on "Philosophical Language," Marcel sees in silence an intrinsic value of its own. See notes 12 and 13 in same chapter.

[27] MJ, pp.332-333, CF, p.9 and EBHD, p.46.

[28] CF, p.20.

and sharpened in the 1925 essay referred to earlier. The distinction is not between the subjective and the objective, but rather a distinction between existence and objectivity. There is nothing problematic about existence. It is not possible to make of existence a predicate and say then that "something" exists. Nor is it possible to speak of "existence in general" without making an illicit abstraction. I cannot speak of "I exist" if I mean my ego in contrast with something that does not exist. In fact, we probably can never disengage the existing from the non-existing.[29] [This is what Jean-Paul Sartre misunderstands.] Eschewing a radical skepticism, we should say that "existence is". That existence of which we speak cannot be demonstrated. This means that it is primary--not capable of reduction or of being derived.

My body. It is not interposed between things and me. Rather, secondary reflection shows that "I am my body." Thus, the distinction between existence and objectivity becomes apparent. The difference is between "data on which the mind must be based so as to state any problem whatever," and the date of an objective sort. The former is not problematic. The unity of myself must be thought of as an "hicceity" which by definition repels analysis. "My body is thought of in so far as it is a body, but my thought collides with the fact that is my body."[30]

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[29] This is what Sartre in distinction between the "in-itself" and the "for-itself" misunderatands.

[30] BH, p.11.

This conclusion does not cause us to relapse into solipcism. Say, for example, that X is relation between my idea of a movement and the movement. But the idea is only an abstraction. When I do raise my arm I can consider it objectively only from a perspective that abstracts me from the fact that the raised arm is part of me. I am both the one who raised the arm and who thought of doing it. Marcel claims that "no physical science is possible regarding the transition which leads from the idea to the act; or rather, regarding what . . . we think we can represent to ourselves as a communication between spheres that are distince." Thus, the sense of the statement, "I am my body."[31]

Nonmediatisable Immediate. The distinction between existence and objectivity leads Marcel to talk of my body as "subject". With this subject I may have communion. We have a "noninstrumental communion with our bodies".[32] This does not mean that I am using my body; my subjectivity is not instrumentally based. This me-body existence must be regarded as unique to human existence.

Marcel draws on modern philosophy to make his case about mediation. He recalls that Hegel perceived that "all immediates" are "meditizable ad infinitum". "Here" is temporally mediatisable; "now" is spatially so. But this

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[31]The previous three paragraphs are largely based on the 1925 essay, "Existence and Objectivity," in MJ, pp.319-339.

[32]MBI, p.101. In MJ, p.246, discussing the matter of parapsychological relations, he first talks of "sympathetic mediation" or "noninstrumental mediation".

need not imply with Bertrand Russell that the accumulation of "point-instants" form an "exhaustive whole". Rather, it means that "my immediate experience . . . cannot be justified from the point of view of pure thought."[33]

This leads Marcel to postulate the I-body existence as a "non-mediatizable immediate," which is the very root of our existence.[34] This reality that I am is so close to me that I cannot hold it out of a distance from me without changing the reality myself. It has an opacity repellent to pure thought. Marcel wants us to see that he is talking rather of something"I am," an "existential immediate".[35] This brings us back to the notion of manifestation as the exhibition of unique existence, that exclamation which, though unsolicited by myself, when reflected upon, gives us a hint of preanalytic ways of being.

Existential Fulcrum. Thus, Marcel has found a place to stand where he can attempt to move the philosophical world. This "incarnate being" is the one indubitable. It is what Marcel calls in a felicitous phrase, "the existential fulcrum," which makes possible the thought dialectic of primary and secondary reflection as levers to knowledge.[36]

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[33]This paragraph is based on MBI, p.109.

[34]MBI, p.109.

[35]MBI, p.111.

[36]MBI, p.71. In MJ, p.269, he says, "It is incarnation that makes the dialectical standpoint possible. Dialectics which were not based on an experience which is not completely mediatisable would not even be dialectics."

This discussion is basic to an understanding of Marcel's thought. It should be clearly understood that if this stance in Marcel's thought could be effectively undermined his whole series of reflections would be jumbled into insensibility. The I-body existence is both the prime model of the ontological mystery and the standpoint for our approach to all of the aspects of that mystery. Marcel said on 3rd December, 1920:

> In this sense my body is . . . the prototype of an existant and in a still deeper sense a landmark for existants.[37]

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[37] MJ, p.269. Merleau Ponty's notions on the I-body problem are similar to Marcel's. In fact, his elaborations of this notion are a significant contribution to modern philosophy. But I agree with Richard M. Zaner in The Problem of Embodiment: Some Contributions to a Phenomenology of the Body (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), pp.35,41,147 and passim, that, as others have suspected, his debt to Marcel is heavier than he says. The translators of Merleau-Ponty's Sens and Non-Sense, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), Herbert and Patricia Dreyfus, admittedly rather personal, American friends of Marcel, say in the preface that Merleau-Ponty "draws on the 'existential philosophy' of Heidegger and Marcel, especially Marcel in this matter." James M. Edie, an American authority in phenomenology, writes an unaccountably condescending review of the section of Zaner's book which in part analyses Marcel; He believes it to be "doubtful" that Marcel exerted "great" influence on Merleau-Ponty; c.f. Review of Zaner's Embodiment in Journal of the History of Philosophy, Vol.V. (July, 1967), p.302.

I find Merleau-Ponty's language and meaning so similar to Marcel's that it is difficult to believe that the parallel is only coincidence. Is it possible that he did not wish to admit indebtedness to a "Catholic critic"? C.f. Merleau-Ponty, op.cit., p.73; also, c.f. Richard M. Zaner's article "An Approach to a Philosophical Anthropology" Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. XXVII (September, 1966), pp.55-68 in which Marcel's ideas play the most prominent role, even though he is familiar with

Merleau-Ponty too. Further, c.f. Spiegelberg, op.cit., I, p.530, says after a careful analysis of documents, "at least some kind of osmosis from Marcel to Merleau-Ponty seems plausible hypothesis." Such a conclusion need not detract from that great French philosopher who tragically died in middle life.

"The self is half the world it perceives."
William Ernest Hocking

CHAPTER VI

INDEFINABLE SELFHOOD

A. Preliminary Remarks

Though interlaced with its own unique traits, the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel is acquainted with the European philosophical tradition. The Cartesian heritage remains. This explains the evident concern in Marcel's thought to grapple at a very stage with the conditions of personal human existence. But Marcel has carefully considered the conditions on the self-life from a phenomenological point of view commensurate with his aversion for abstraction. The influence even of Husserl and Heidegger is only a minor factor here. Marcel had "an intuitive use of the phenomenological method"[1] rather than an academically derived one.

B. Self-Consciousness

The notion of "self-consciousness" has led to some intense reflection on Marcel's part. In a crucial

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[1] Schmitz, op.cit., p.7.

essay he looks at the phenomenon of "unavailability". It is noted that the process of development includes the dialectic of selection and exclusion. "Each of us," Marcel observes, "becomes the centre of a sort of mental space arranged in concentric zones of decreasing interest and participation."[2] It seems, in fact, that to develop a personality involves what might be metaphorically pictured as the secretion of a kind of shell in which we are "gradually hardened and imprisoned".[3] Marcel says that he knows from personal experience that the meeting of a stranger by chance may be the occasion of "an irresistible appeal which overturns the habitual perspectives just as a gust of wind might tumble down the panels of a stage set."[4] The self-contained person quickly sees that "such cracks are repaired almost at once."[5] Yet, the "contingent" and "artificial" nature of the "personalised pattern" has been revealed.[6] A momentary "transparency" has replaced the usual "opacity".[7] The usual "preoccupation" with "health," "fortune," "inward perfection," etc., is analysed by Marcel to be the expression of anxiety in the face of the death:

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[2] PE, p.27.

[3] PE, p.27; also, c.f. HV, p.16 where self is called "an enclosure which moves" and is "vulnerable".

[4] PE, p.27.

[5] PE, p.27.

[6] PE, p.27.

[7] PE, p.28.

> There is every reason to believe that this indefinite disquiet should be identified with the anguish of temporality and with the aspiration of man not towards, but by death, which is at the heart of pessimism.[8]

Marcel uses the notion of "self-consciousness" in a pejorative sense, noting that the French "conscient de soi" and the German selb'stbwusst do not carry this connotation of being weighed down by the self.[9] It is sufficient for our point to quote from the closing statement of the second chapter of the William James Lectures:

> Thus we come upon one of the basic ideas in my work . . . self-consciousness, far from being an illuminating principle, as traditional philosophy has held, on the contrary shuts the human being in on himself and thus results in opacity rather than enlightenment.[10]

Obviously, Marcel here finds himself at odds with Descartes. Reflecting on the early years of his philosophical effort, Marcel comments:

> I attempted to show that it is indeed through the subject that we must try to understand how we participate in being, but only on the condition that the subject be reinstated in his reality as subject, apart from all misleading objectification.[11]

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[8] PE, p.28.

[9] EBHD, pp.101-102. On these pages the notion of self-consciousness is analysed. Marcel notes the figure of Willoughly in George Meredith's (1828-1909) novel, The Egoist, as an example of his point; also, c.f. HV, p.16 for a striking description of this self-burden based on Meredith's novel.

[10] EBHD, p.34. Marcel is careful to note a difference between "egoism," a necessary trait for all, and "egotism," the trait gone to extremes; c.f. MBI, pp.7-8 where Marcel abjures both "ego-centrism" and "heato-centrism" as always causing blindness; also, c.f. CF, p.66.

[11] EBHD, p.23.

This reaction is against the position of an abstract and distinct ego over against the body and the world. Marcel sees that the timid boy standing to give a memorised address before a large adult audience and forgetting his lines is a common illustration from life which severely damages the Cartesian hypothesis. The indubitable factor in Marcel's scheme is rather, sensation.[12] In summary, a commentator says: Marcel sees the cogito as "willed non-participation" making neither subject or object nonexistent and causing the world to "become empty". Reflection must be reinserted to discover the intention disclosed in the immediacy of experienced sensation.[13] This is consciousness, but not self-consciousness, except as the self is integral to the sensation experience.

On the matter of consciousness, Marcel made an interesting, if cursory, survey of the history of modern philosophy in the Gifford Lectures. David Hume has postulated "states of consciousness" without a self; Descartes proposed "a self apart from all states of consciousness"; Kant tried to divide the self by naming its functions, but ended by "thingifying the self" and was unable to rescue experience from a profound dualism between its transcendent and its ordinary elements. Though we can agree with Descartes that consciousness is not bodily, Spinoza's solution--that consciousness is body "represented" in a particular way--is not adequate since it assumes a permanence which body does not have except ideally. This

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[12] CF, p.16.

[13] C.f. Pamplume, op.cit., p.92. "Objectivity is only an hypostasis of absence." He quotes from Marcel's drama, L'Iconoclaste, "Knowledge banishes to infinity all that it imagines it embraces."

leads us to side with Bergson's valid, though timid, rejection of "psycho-physical parallelism". Marcel then says: "The path that we should follow here is rather thatfirst explored and mapped out by phenomenologists of the school of Husserl."[14]

C. Am I My Life?

"Am I my life?" The question puts us in a quandry. Negatively, Marcel would object if this implies that I am bound within the limits of my experience. Suppose I kept a diary on a shelf in my study. There on the shelf lies my life. But what if my secretary mistakenly burns these

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[14]MBI, pp.47-51. It is difficult to know whether or not this is a minor capitulation to the fame of Husserl. Certainly he was more influenced by Hocking than by Husserl on the matter of selfhood. He credits Hocking with freeing him from "solipcistic" selfhood in his essay, "Solipcism Surmounted," Philosophy, Religion and the Coming World Civilization: Essays in Honor of W.E. Hocking. trans. and ed. L.S. Rouner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p.23. Spiegelberg, op.cit., has some well documented positions on Marcel as a phenomenologist. He regards him as a "pioneer" in the field, p.401, though his lack of patient analysis is a serious defect, pp.439-440. Spiegelberg discounts Husserl's influence on Marcel as minor and indicates that Marcel himself was a "main inspirer" of the movement along with Franz Brentano (1838-1917),pp.424, 425. He suggests that Marcel may derive his phenomenology from Max Scheler (1874-1928), p.423.

diary papers. Does she destroy my life? That is absurd.[15]

There are two factors which support the feeling of absurdity we have about this illustration. First, we can no longer intimately know the past, and, second, we cannot exactly reinact the past in any way. Marcel agrees with Sartre that one cannot recognise himself in the "irrevocable" completed act.[16] He points to Proust's (1871-1922) great novel, A la Recherche du temps perdu, as evidence that "it would be an illusion to claim that my life, as I turn it into a story, corresponds at all completely with my life as I have actually lived it."[17] My life exceeds my grasp. It either is more or less depending on the vitality of intention. My life is not finished and, hence, cannot be summed up. My life is the "realm of the yes and no". Thus, Marcel concludes: "My life infinitely transcends my possible conscious grasp of my life at any given moment; fundamentally and essentially it refuses to tally with itself."[18]

Marcel seems to be saying that there is a unity between myself and my lived life but that I am not exactly summed up in my past. This exposes an important difference between Marcel and Sartre which has vital implications for existentialist ethics. Sartre refuses to acknowledge any dialectic between the being-in-itself (l'être en-soi) and in being-for-itself (l'être pour-soi). When the human

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[15] MBI, pp.156-157.

[16] MBI, p.161. Ostermann, op.cit., p.397 says, "The living centre of the past has vanished and I cannot summon up what is nonexistent."

[17] MBI, p.156.

[18] MBI, p.167.

person turns back upon himself in thought or decision he exposes the nothingness (ne'ant) which he is and from which he is condemned to make something--a goal he can never achieve since he is unable to recover the "irrevocable" past which only a moment before was his present.[19] Marcel, on the other hand, claims that when one begins the task of "recollecting oneself" the antinomies of being and action are "reconciled in itself". There is begun a "detachment" which is a "liberation". Like Sartre, Marcel's reflection involves the opening of a gap between my being and my life, showing that I am not my life in any exact sense. Here we must take account of secondary reflection. In Marcel's description I am able to withdraw: "In this withdrawal I carry with me that which I am and which perhaps my life is not."[20] Thus, while for Sartre man is exclusively his future--a projectile leaving no trace--for Marcel man faces his future by a form of recollection that brings his past to bear on the future.

Ostermann helps in this difficult delineation. Sartre asks, "Am I my life?" The answer is a "hollow man" destined to choose his own freedom without any purpose of a durable nature. Marcel answers by taking up a position which refuses the dilemma of picturing my life simply as "flow" or "permanence". Looking closely at such evidence as "self-sacrifice," Marcel sees here an interruption

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[19] C.f. HV, p.166-184.

[20] This paragraph contains quotations from PE, pp.12-13. The illustration of the notecase is appropriate here, MBI, p.174; also, c.f. Newton P. Stallknecht, "Gabriel Marcel and the Human Situation," Review of Metaphysics, Vol. VII (June, 1954), pp.661-667.

in the flow of my life, an interruption which I may take with me into the future as a "spiritual reality which to deny would be treachery".[21]

Marcel sees in the scientists of human behavior a betrayal just as obscene as that of Sartre. The latter says an absolute no to the notion that "I am my life." The psychologist, on the other hand, seems too often to say an absolute yes to it by trying to categorise me in one of their abstractly prepared slots. I quote from W.E. Hocking's comment on Marcel's position:

> In so far as we accept this as our self-definition and become accustomed to see ourselves in terms of our functions in a well-naturalized social order, we are subtly alienated from our own ontological sense; we become abstractions, and lend ourselves to 'techniques of degradation' which cultivate the mass mind with its capacities for fanaticism and violence, and its incapacity for life in the universal, wherein alone any genuine national solidarity or human brotherhood can exist.[22]

D. Manifold Selfhood

Having disclaimed a "moi" identifiable as either idealist or empirical and having asserted a nonidentity of the "moi" and my life, Marcel is obliged to fix his own position. But this is just what it is difficult for Marcel and his commentators to do.

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[21] Ostermann, op.cit., pp.397-398. The quotes are from Ostermann though the way the notions are put down here is my own and may not necessarily coincide with Ostermann's final understanding.

[22] Hocking, op.cit., pp.445-446.

Marcel admits that he posits a self which is highly ambiguous. He says:

> The self which confers what I shall henceforth call a reverberatory power on facts does not seem to be identical with the self which refuses to let itself be penetrated by that power. But they are both my self.[23]

This quotation produces what one might call, with a touch of irony, Marcel's split personality. It is probably better, because more precise, to say that Marcel recognises that I have a multi-sided relationship to myself. Marcel recognises a possibility of an "infinite number of relationships" which I may have to myself.[24] But even to suggest a "relation" is misleading to a degree. This brings us back to try to conceptualise the mystery of the "I exist" as delineated in what was said about "incarnate being".

In what must be regarded as a yet incomplete attempt to establish "personal identity" between the rejected extremes of the "endless changing flow of sensation" and the "static eternity of the concept," Marcel suggests a new category. This category must be acknowledged as hard to locate. We can say, however, that it is related to "the spiritual in general" and to the "specific notes of the spirit, as such". Yet our approach to this category must be through the concreteness of incarnate existence, especially keeping an ever listening ear to the strains of

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[23] MBI, p.65.

[24] MBI, p.87.

"intimate inner experience".[25]

Yet it must be admitted that we are not yet able to define exactly what this self life is. Certainly the talk of "split-personality" and "multi-sided relations" is deceptive when we recall that Marcel is endeavoring to identify by reflection what he calls a "non-mediatizable immediate" which is not a relationship in the usual sense. It will be necessary to discuss Marcel's concept of "participation" and "intersubjectivity" before the meaning of "I exist" comes into focus.

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[25]This paragraph based on MBI, p.191. Marcel has had a growing influence on psychiatry in the past decade. The Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, an American publication whose editorial board reads like a Who's Who in psychiatry, devoted an entire issue to his work in 1962. A year later a significant article appeared: Helm Stierlin's "Existentialism Meets Psychotherapy," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. XXIV (December, 1963), pp.215-239, in which Marcel's ideas on selfhood in relation to bodily existence figured prominently.

"I can act on the world by means of my body only because I can also be acted upon by the world."

Richard M. Zaner

CHAPTER VII

INFLUENTIAL PARTICIPATION

A. Preliminary Remarks

The notion of participation was among the first developed in Marcel's philosophical repertoire. It was a concern of Jules Lagneau, the late nineteenth century teacher of Emile Auguste Chartier (known as Alain) (1868-1951) and Léon Brunschvig (1869-1944). Marcel was negatively influenced by Brunschvig at a time when he was struggling to free himself from the abstraction of philosophic idealism. Indeed, Marcel admits that his acceptance of Brunschvig's insistance on a "strict connection between demonstrable truth and verification" later led him in reaction to "affirm the existence of a region beyond the verifiable which would be the province of religious thought."[1]

Marcel sees now that the essay, "Theorie de la Participation," included in the published Fragments Philosophiques, 1909-1914, made this idealist distinction with a "Kantian echo".[2] He sees that he was only asserting

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[1] EBHD, p.25. Marcel credits Louis Lavelle with a later development of this notion in a systematic way, EBHD, p.23.

[2] EBHD, p.27.

the religious sphere in "as if" fashion, based on the subject who willed to act according to this hypothesis.[3] Marcel believes that his drama, La Grace, written in 1910-1911 remained within these idealist confines. But he believes his unpublished drama, Le Palais de Sable, of two years later, began to escape these limits through the participation of the characters in the "bond between beings" which he was later to identify as "intersubjectivity".[4] It becomes a key concept in most of Marcel's later writings.

Certain delicate distinctions need to be made in an effort to centre our thoughts on this notion before us. This very way of putting it gives us a clue to the first negation. Marcel is not picturing a part-whole participation. Such a picture would involve us once again in the misconstruction of objectivity where it does not apply. Marcel wants to point toward a participation which does not lose itself in a panpsychism but yet discovers itself as an identity which is finally beyond verbal definition.

Marcel argues that the notion of the abstract is exactly opposite to the notion of participation. We must centre our thoughts in our experience. The picture is one of involvement rather than that of the spectator. This person has by reflection passed through and beyond the level of analysis, the level where there is an attempt to establish cause-and-effect.[5] Marcel argues that participation occurs when a spectacle evokes an "inner meaning".[6]

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[3] EBHD, p.30

[4] EBHD, p.34.

[5] CF, p.87.

[6] MBI, p.127.

For example, suffering gains whatever meaning it has when one has passed to a different level where "I the patient . . . am able or not to put this suffering to good use."[7]

There is a problem to find a word which simultaneously speaks of contributing to and of being added to, in nonquantitative senses. Participation inevitably has the tinge of the former. Admitting that this term is "ambiguous," the suggestion of the term "permeability," in the sense of "porosity," has been given, but this simply emphasizes the other half of the notion we seek to identify.[8] A word like "attachment" may be an improvement in conveying the idea.[9] Marcel's Gifford Lectures translator seems to accept the term "envolvement" when he speaks of a "situation" in which "I find myself involved".[10] In another place, the translator uses the term "adhesion" and the French-English term "engagement" to refer to the situation of what has been called participation.[11] I find the word "influence" of considerable help at this point, since it is often used in both the active and passive voices though admittedly not at the same time.

B. Being-In-A-Situation

Marcel wants to point to a situation where I am <u>influential</u> precisely by my refusal to be self-assertive

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[7] Marcel, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.213.

[8] C.f. CF, pp.87 and 127.

[9] Suggested by Mounier, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp.61ff.

[10] MBI, p.8.

[11] CF, p.95. I will reserve this term for the "I-thou" relation.

or, put in another way, exactly by my acceptance of being acted upon.

Active Receptivity. This notion of "active receptivity" is absolutely central to Marcel's thought. He refers to Bergson often at this point, in two ways: First, he conjures up the ghost of his old mentor to support a complaint about language structure: "Human speech . . . is naturally adapted to the statement of spatial relationships, which are relationships, fundamentally, of mere justaposition."[12] It is the notion of "exclusion" or "mere juxtaposition" which the reality of participation overcomes and yet Marcel notes ironically that even here "the structure of language is forcing me to imply the contrary of what I intend to assert."[13] The second reference to Bergson, at this point, is in allusion to his notion of "open" and "closed," in Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion. The distinction is really made on the level of moral reflection. Marcel reports:

> The first or closed morality is that of a being who is an integrated part of the society to which he belongs; he and it together are absorbed . . . The other morality implies an impetus, a need for movement. The morality of the Gospel is essentially that of the open soul. 'The act by which the soul opens out[,] broadens [,] and raises to pure spirituality a morality enclosed and materialized in ready-made rules.'[14]

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[12] MBI, p.128; supra, note eight in chapter on "Philosophical Language".

[13] MBI, p.129. He refers to this problem in Bergson's name numerous times.

[14] CF, pp.189-190. The last sentence is quoted from the translation by R.A. Audra and C. Brereton (New York: Henry Holt, 1935), p.51; also, c.f. MJ, p.xiii; CF, pp.9, 48, 96 and 133; MBI, p.146; and EBHD, p.152 on the notion of "open" and "closed".

Marcel wants to show that this notion has an applicability far beyond the level of morality.[15] Both these ideas are reiterated and emphasized in the whole range of Marcel's thought.

The phrase which Marcel uses to illumine participation is that of "être en situation". Heidegger's "in der Welt sein" later attracted Marcel's attention as being a more distinct formulation of what he had tried to say earlier in the Metaphysical Journal and the 1925 "Existence and Objectivity" essay.[16] This "being in a situation" and "in the world" is difficult to picture. What has just been said about participation is appropriate to the point certainly. It is neither a picture of barnacles clinging to a ship's hull or chemicals dissolved in water, but rather the picture of a fish inhabiting his own watery environment. The notions of up-againstness and dissolvedness are transformed into one of involvedness. At the beginning of his Gifford Lectures, Marcel says that the notion of "situation" is profoundly important for him and then he proceeds to give a preliminary definition of that situation:

> A situation is something in which I find myself involved . . . the situation is not something which presses on the self merely from outside, but something which colours its interior states; or . . . [is] the usual antithesis between inner and outer . . . not beginning to lose a good deal of its point.[17]

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[15] MBI, p.190.

[16] EBHD, pp.42-45. He prefers the less spatialising "être au monde".

[17] MBI, p.8.

Throwness. Is this notion akin to that of the German idea of "geworfenheit"? Only careful analysis will answer this question. Marcel acknowledges that there is a certain "non-being" about human existence.[18] But unlike Sartre, he refuses to admit that I have suddenly been thrust on a stage without even being given lines to speak. Marcel deeply experiences the sense of emptiness connected with our un-self-solicited act on this time-driven spatial stage.[19] But it is not without ontological significance that I have a memory. Keeping in mind what has already been said about the unique I-body unity, the following statement shows exactly how the alledged stark nakedness of the human condition is clothed by the past. In the true sense of mystery for Marcel, he says:

> I am my past. Does not this mean that between my past experiences and my actual experience there is a relation of sympathy, but that this relation is closely bound up with the instrumental function of my body? Is not this global experience which is me, but which far from being capable of being objectified is the condition of any possible objectivisation, the mediating element which alone allows the attention to bear on itself, that is to say, which alone allows it to be? And the impossibility of defining this past-as-subject which makes memory possible is only another way of expressing the impossibility of treating the mediating element as an object and of forming an idea of it.[20]

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[18]Marcel cites François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon in support of the notion that man is a creature situated "between Being and Non-Being," EBHD, p.77; c.f. MBII, chapters one and two for Marcel's most intensive treatment of "being".

[19]See the desolate words recorded on 22nd March, 1931: "Time is a well whose shaft goes down to death--to my death--to my perdition. The gulf of time: how I shudder to look down on time! My death is at its bottom and its dank breath mounts up and chils me," BH, p.80. This appears in his diary after his conversion to Catholicism.

[20]MJ, pp.249-250. Supra, pp.66-67 on Marcel's notion of the significance of memory.

The I-Body to Self-World Analogy. Here we see that the "I-body" mystery is more than just a sample. It is the initial level which appears to be a part of, as well as analogous to, the way I exist in this world. This is what Marcel means when he calls the body the "mediateur absolu".[21] A commentator says of Marcel's position on this matter: "The world exists for me inasmuch as I am incarnated."[22] Marcel said in 1927 or 1928:

> It is permissible to ask whether the union of the soul and body is, in essence, really different from the union between the soul and other existing things . . . Does not a certain experience of the self as tied up with the universe, underlie all affirmation of existence?[23]

Though he would not now use the term "soul" so readily in this context, Marcel would certainly answer this quoted question in the affirmative. The question is only rhetorical. I do emerge as a body-self in a world made possible for me by this unique configuration. Conversely, this body-self, which I am, participates in the thing-world in a fashion analogous to how the self is engaged with the body. Altizer puts it succinctly: "We belong to the world through our actual bodies, for my body is the center of my universe . . ."[24]

What kind of situation or world emerges in these terms? It is a nonobjective world. It is not that I am in

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[21] BH, p.13. This is equivalent to the reference to my body as the "non-mediatizable immediate". Supra, note 31 in chapter on "Unitary Existence".

[22] Ostermann, op.cit., p.395.

[23] BH, p.11; also, MJ, p.338.

[24] Thomas J.J. Altizer, Review of Seymour Cain's Gabriel Marcel, Journal of Religion, Vol. XLV (October, 1965), p.353.

a position to deny, or ever affirm, the objective existence of this or that thing; it is rather that my knowledge of the situation is mediated to me through a body which cannot offer objectivity since this body belongs to nobody else. But unlike the thought of Sartre, where the world is devoid of any structure other than what the self gives to it, Marcel finds a world which comes to meet the actualisation of the intending self with the energy of its own potentiality.[25] As Alexander says: "Self and world entertain a relation of complementarity . . ."[26] This situation or world seems to be an integral part of that indubitable existence which is mine. I can, in spectator-like fashion, divorce this world from myself but in so doing I make it impossible to make any sense of just what this prereflexive consisted. In this observation operation I have banished to infinity that immediate experience which reflection to the second power shows to be the very condition of making analysis possible. I am free to see this as a further problem to be solved but as with the so-called mind-body problem and in exactly the same manner, we will again lose ourselves in an infinite series of regressions. What I must realise is that the situation has encroached on myself in such a way that I cannot assertthe reality of one without simultaneously admitting the other into the area of affirmation. This is precisely the mystery of my being.[27] Thus, Marcel's mysterious epistemology comes into focus:

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[25]We are now at the heart of Husserl's phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty's notions are similar at this point.

[26]Alexander, op.cit., pp.347-348.

[27]C.f. CF, pp.67-68.

> From this standpoint, contrary to what epistemology seeks vainly to establish, there exists well and truly a mystery of cognition; knowledge is contingent on a participation in being for which no epistemology can account because it continually presupposes it.[28]

Marcel's Meta-Realism. What might this theory of "knowledge" be called? Marcel himself suggested "my 'sensualistic' metaphysics".[29] William Ernest Hocking claims for Marcel a "widened empiricism".[30] We have suggested the term "meta-realism" for the reason that, rejecting all idealism,[31] Marcel approaches the subject-object categories in realist fashion but sees that in such an approach there is a prior reality presupposed to which secondary reflection can only indirectly allude. Marcel's real distinction is between existence and objectivity. Before an American audience he asked if this could be construed as a "realist"

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[28] PE, p.8. Underlining mine.

[29] MJ, p.316.

[30] Hocking, op.cit., p.440. Hocking suggests that this theory of epistemology may finally be Marcel's major contribution to philosophy. He calls Marcel's empiricism "wider" because it extends to the "to be". This is empirical because he discovers the exigence of being in himself and others. As a participant in this age when nonbeing has opened like a gulf before our eyes, being has once again been brought to the fore. As we have noted, Hocking regards Marcel's "exigence" as preliminary to and more universal than the "angst" of Kierkegaard.

[31] Marcel said in BH, p.27, in a note dating from 26th June, 1929, after having read Father Garrigou-Lagrange's "book on God," that, "I feel that I am today rid of whatever traces of idealism remained in my philosophy. I feel exorcised . . ." The book Marcel referred to was probably Garrigou-Lagrange's, Dieu. It should be noted that J.B. Stearns' doctoral thesis at Emory University in 1961, titled "Gabriel Marcel's Repudiation of Idealism," aimed to prove that Marcel is not as far removed from idealism as he thinks.

position.[32] He answered himself in the affirmative, with the stipulation that it be understood as an "existential realism and not an objective realism like [Ralph Barton] Perry's which is centred on things as objects."[33] It is clear that in this understanding the theory of knowledge and the theory of reality are inseparable. This may point up the exactness of the term, "meta-realism," especially if we recall the Aristotelian origin of the usage of that prefix.[34]

C. Models of Influence

It is of interest to take note of the models which symbolise our relation to the world. Marcel specifically denies the transmission picture of sensation. He calls it an "absurd" interpretation because "sensation is affection, not information."[35] The picture of two telegraph offices or two wireless stations--a transmitting encoder, a code and receiving decoder--is not appropriate to experience.[36] Thus, he simply denies that there is any meaning in the "naive and common-sense realist view" or in the similar "mechanist interpretation of science".[37] The idea of John

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[32] EBHD, p.47.

[33] EBHD, p.47.

[34] Indeed, Marcel credits Aristotle with "some penetrating views of the subject," in CF, p.28. This is one of the few references to Aristotle to be found in Marcel's works.

[35] MJ, p.187; c.f. MBI, pp.107-109.

[36] Hocking states that he and Alfred North Whitehead reject this notion in their own ways, op.cit., p.451. Likewise, the British thinker, Gilbert Ryle, in his important volume, The Concept of Mind.

[37] MJ, p.187. The body as an interposed signaler between me and things, Marcel insists, is a "pseudo-idea"; c.f. p.332.

Stuart Mill that "matter is a permanent possibility of sensation" leads us to admit that "existence should be defined as a mere possibility,"[38] but it is clear to Marcel that my existence is the one thing I cannot doubt without falling into an illogical solipcism.

We are brought back to the importance of "my body". If we posit my body as a third element--an "unsensed sensa" which translates between "physical events and sense data"--we are contrained to see that the body is itself only a message sent out and we are back where we started. But if we see that my body, inasmuch as it is strictly mine, is a mediator not subject to any further mediation, we discover an existentially indubitable sensation. Of course, we must not refuse the analytical process; that would be a "piece of trickery". But we must see that the analytic stage is transcended in the rediscovery of the mystery of my existence in the world. This is the discovery of an "opaque," which stubbornly resists complete penetration. Rather, we are at the point where the so-called problem of sensation "encroaches on its own data".[39] We have returned to "incarnation," the essence of participation. This incarnation is inseparable from the felt mode of participation in the world about it. The fact of sensationally participating in the universe and of feelin~ a bond with my body, together, are "data" of a primary sort.[40]

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[38]MJ, p.271. Marcel's view of sensation was influenced by his parapsychic experiences; c.f. p.271 especially.

[39]This paragraph based on MBI, pp.107-109.

[40]Gallagher, op.cit., p.20 says it well: "Sensation is not a reception, but an immediate participation in the world. It is the operation which actualises my incarnation in the world."

Rather than accept any mechanistic view, Marcel presents an alternative picture. He regards "feeling" to be a "mode of participation" or influence. By "feeling" he obviously is not referring to something sentimental in nature. Neither does he mean sensation as opposed to the reflective act. He means sensation which comes to life through the reflective attention of myself. What this means is that the so-called relation between myself and my body and between myself and the world is really a sensation which occurs prior to any analysis of it and yet not apart from my consciousness of it. This needs to be further disentangled, for it possibly represents one of the most difficult aspects of Marcel's philosophy.

Marcel readily admits to the massive influence music has played in his life.[41] It gave him the "assurance" that his conclusion concerning nonobjectivity was correct, because he found in Bach and the later Beethoven a "supreme authority which did not allow of any explanation.[42] He found in music such as this, a certainty which did not yield to any verification principle and yet went beyond private experience in its obvious communal nature.[43] Bach's music gives Marcel the gift of reason and more. He tells of coming home from a Bach concert filled with the assurance

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[41] EBHD, p.21.

[42] EBHD, p.26. At other times he mentions Wagner, Brahms and Faure, CF, p.122. He notes this element in some of Mozart's quartets and symphonies, EBHD, p.170. His play, Le Dard, exhibits the revealing nature of music, EBHD, pp.116ff; also, true of Le Quatuor en Fa Dièse.

[43] PF, p.127 where Marcel says that Bach's contatas and Passions iniated in him a sense of the authenticity of the life of faith in a mysterious way; also, c.f. PF, p.18 where Beethoven's quartet, Opus 135, inspired the same sense in Marcel. The same may be said for Beethoven's Missa Solemnis, the "masterpiece of master-pieces," p.18.

that it is honourable to be a man. He says:

> Reason, though it recognizes itself as overwhelmed by the music of Bach, expands itself, on the contrary, to welcome that light, for in its depths, reason has a presentiment, though a very indistinct one, that this light is of the same nature as reason itself, and I am ready to affirm that reason makes it a point of honour to proclaim this identity, to whose origin and nature nevertheless, it has no clue.[44]

The importance of this quotation, which includes the terms "identity" and "depth," will become clearer in the course of this section.

Marcel also finds this harmonising experience in several contemporary writers. They seem to be loosely grouped under the category of "metaphysical anthropology". Among these are Max Scheler, Peter Wust, Theodor Haecker, G.K. Chesterton, Charles Péguy and Gustave Thibon.[45] In another list he adds to Thibon, Max Picard and T.S. Eliot as thinkers "imbued with the sense of the universal."[46] At another time he mentions this unifying influence in Paul Valéry and he finds it occasionally in Paul Claudel.[47] Marcel hears in these writers a distant echo which reminds him of that which is intimate and yet tending toward universality. For him these writers sometimes manifest a literary creativity that gives evidence of true participation in existence.

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[44] MAH, p.191. Underlining mine.
[45] HV, p.162.
[46] DW, p.viii.
[47] MAH, p.29.

Yet a third source of assurance for Marcel concerning the nonobjective unity of existence at the level of depth is his research into psychic phenomena. Strange experiences, occuring while he was head of the Red Cross Information Service during World War I (a post he took after failing to attain active military service because of medical reasons) led him into a new area. In the Winter of 1916-1917, he carried out certain psychical experiments. Of these he reports: "The result of these experiments made it impossible for me to doubt the reality of metapsychical phenomena."[48] It was, he reports, an interest closed to all "accredited philosophers" of France, with the possible exception of Bergson.[49] In a note dated April, 1916, Marcel claims he saw that "so-called occult knowledge" was not so very different from, possibly even at the root of, "the most ordinary, most incontrovertible, experiences."[50] Later, in a 1955 lecture, he is somewhat more cautious, but even then refused to deny the reality of "parapsychical experiences," however "private," "sporadic," and essentially "religious" they may be.[51]

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[48]PE, p.91.

[49]EBHD, p.48.

[50]M, p.130.

[51]Gabriel Marcel, "The Influence of Psychic Phenomena on My Philosophy," The 12th Frederic W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture (London: Society for Psychical Research, 1955), p.20. In "Solipcism Surmounted," op.cit., a 1966 statement, he reaffirms this position, p.31.

D. Empirical Analogies

If these models seem to us somewhat less stable than Marcel seems to think, he does present us with analogies which have a bit more gripping power because of their higher empirical element. Marcel believes that there are certain nonobjective relationships which do not so much signify, as signal, the notion of participation he is interested to establish.

Marcel gives attention to several of these nonobjective participative connections. There is the relation of a peasant to the soil.[52] Here Marcel would take very seriously--with ontological seriousness--the now trite

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[52] C.f. MBI, p.116. He speaks of a child's relation to its doll in the same manner in MBI, p.187. Marcel wants to indicate a relation which is not "strictly utilitarian". He says: "It is perfectly clear that the soil to which the peasant is so passionately attached is not something about which he can really speak," MBI, p.116. Some would not think this quite so clear. Others would point out that the peasant has this inexpressible feeling precisely because he has not entered the modern world. Others might ask if the peasant's silence is due any more to the unobjective nature of the relation than to the lack of ability to express himself. Marcel could well use more care in selecting his examples. It is his contention, however, that the innocent of this world have a remnant of essential humanity that the city dweller of the Western world is in danger of losing. Marcel would rightly insist that those who too quickly cast this notion aside as simple superstition are giving an exhibition of that unattached dogmatism which is a part of the problem. Marcel would claim that such an attitude indicates even a lack of nostalgia for something he believes to be ontological and, as such, communal and persistent.

Marcel sees this nonobjective relation to the world, this "global awareness," as something which is akin to the ontological values which we shall discuss later. It is the basis for the apprehension of these values. Marcel himself claims that music has provided him with a substitute for the "ground-soil" his own environment has lacked. It is this element of authenticity which makes a drama, for instance, ring true. C.f. "The Finality of the Drama" op.cit., pp.339-340.

saying: "You can take the boy away from the farm but you can't take the farm out of the boy." At some point he says much the same thing of the nexus between the sailor and the sea.[53] In the Gifford Lectures, Marcel makes the startling statement that the patriot's country is in his blood.[54]

Some of these "situations" Marcel elaborates with more care. He takes the concrete situation of a hotel in a "bad situation," because of bad odour from a nearby tannery. If I hear of the closure of the hotel, I say it was probably because of its "bad situation". But that is merely to establish an objective cause-and-effect relationship between the bad odour, which caused travellers to seek other lodging at a distance from the tannery and the coincident boarding up of the windows of the hotel. Without necessarily denying that approach, could we not say that the hotel was neither "self-contained" nor "porous," but rather had "an aptness to be influenced," or had "a readiness to take impressions"?[55] These notions do not admit to easy objectification.

A similar example might be noted in relation to Marcel's outline of "my feeling at home." Marcel notes that it is possible for us to move to a new location, taking all our belongings with us, but to feel strangely

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[53]Source unknown. Professor Ian Henderson has supported this idea by his experience with farmers and fishermen when he was a parish minister in the Scottish Highlands.

[54]"A man's own country is not something fanciful, it is something in the blood." MBI, p.193.

[55]MBI, pp.143-146. Notice the use of the term "influence" which I have suggested as appropriate in relation to participation. We may say that the hotel is "influential," also.

"out of joint" in the new situation. Even if one becomes familiar with the environment it does not necessarily follow that the "at home" feeling emerges. For example, a man may move to London to drive a taxi and come to know that city "like the back of his hand" and yet feel that the "something" of Glasgow, his home town, is lacking. We might call that missing element, "ethos". He does not feel at home even though in empirically identifiable ways he is quite familiar with the surroundings. What is this man's relation to the native Londoner? Marcel would reply that the native Londoner may have a "certain living relationship" which might be called "a creative interchange" between him and his environment, while the migrated Glaswegian may not have anything of this sort, especially if he went south simply to take advantage of the larger tips the public are reported to give in London as compared with Glasgow.[56]

Marcel is making a point concerning participation based on that elusive self which we have already noticed. In relation to the hotel instance, Marcel points to a situation open to influence--in this case bad influence. When the application to selfhood is made this suggests neither a hard nor a soft position but rather a tolerant one. A tolerant person is like this hotel situation in that he neither repels, in automatic fashion, any new idea, nor does he mechanically assimilate all new ideas into his own

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[56] C.f. CF, pp.27-28 and 70-71. We are here on the border of the whole matter of the "being and having" problem to be studied later. Marcel suggests that "the American has far less feeling of being at home than the Frenchman or the Englishman, the proof of this lying, for example, in the fact that it is easier for him to live at a hotel, that it is natural for him to eat out, etc."; c.f. p.27.

personality infrastructure. The tolerant person, in the best sense, is a person, with the personal security of "inner cohesion".[57] The term "resilience" fits well here. A resilient person shows us that both rigidity and softness of character are two modes of the same lack--an inner resilience. The hotel example points us to a self which simultaneously retains both a sympathetic spirit and a real "aloofness" (distanz), in the nonpejorative sense. There is in such a person a "being with" attitude which is not resolved in the loss of true selfhood.

The instance of the feeling of "at homeness" is also instructive for the notion of the beinging of the indefinable self which we have already examined. Marcel obviously wants to point to a factor which is not included in the empirical datum but at the same time cannot exist apart from reference to this empirical element. It is the external becoming interiorised that is the factor of import. Marcel says:

> I cannot refer to my feeling at home unless I grant or imply that the self does or can seem to itself to impregnate its environment with its own quality, thereby recognizing itself in its surroundings and entering into an intimate relationship with it.[58]

These two examples enable Marcel to have some ground to talk about the example of "the saint," though he himself does not establish any such connection between the examples. As the concept of "saintliness" is so foreign even to many Christians, it is probable that Marcel should have introduced much more caution in lifting out this

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[57] C.f. MBI, pp.143-146.

[58] CF, pp.27-28.

illustration as an example of the participative reality. Be that as it may, he does say the following things about "the saint" which point to the significant nature of the pictures just considered: First, "the saint" has a certain "detachment" which is not exactly like the detachedness of the spectator. By this I assume Marcel is talking of a kind of ascetic approach to life. This calls to our mind the "distanz" which we mentioned earlier--the existential detachment. Marcel further insists that the saint's detachment is precisely with the positive purpose ("creative intention") of "participating more directly". Here we see the condition for "saintliness" which is also the condition for "being at home". It is that sloughing off of the acquisitive participation for the more profound entrance into creative participation. Marcel suggests that "Perhaps one of the basic tragedies of the modern world consists in a confusion between these two kinds of detachment." Marcel even further suggests that the fact that the notion of "saintliness" is not considered by the masses to be "an unnatural and outrageous anomaly" shows the decisiveness of this vulnerable and, at the same time, powerful category. This latter point seems a bit like the abstraction Marcel usually criticises; it is conceivable that in a world where the daemonic is possible, as Marcel believes, the notion of "saintliness," even of saintly intention, could become anathema.[59] Yet Marcel's previous analogies make his point.

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[59] C.f. CF, pp.56 and 146 for the discussion of saintliness. In other places he discusses this matter also. On the daemonic, this quotation from MBII: "We must recognize that our own world harbours seemingly inexhaustible possibilities of waste and distruction," p.144.

E. Identity and Depth

These examples, which are themselves more than mere examples, point us to two notions which are bound up with the Marcelian notion of participation. They are the notions of "identity" and "depth".

Felt Quality of Identity. By identity, Marcel does not usually mean exact identity.[60] He means to refer to a seeming dualism that when separated disavows the reality of both terms. We might speak of this on the basis of my relation to my past: It can be degraded into a sort of gramaphone recording of the past. Also, our experience with memory shows that we cling to our past in an uneven way. Further, time has brought about vast changes. For example, if I suddenly remember myself as a boy of eight waiting for my mother to return home, anxious because she is late, that does not mean that in an objectifiable way I am still that boy. We must speak of the "felt quality of identity," says Marcel. Here, invoking the notion of sensation, considered above, Marcel brings the same notion to bear on this more nonobjective level.[61]

Marcel admits that this is a problem of "extreme complexity". He suggests an answer in the following manner:

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[60]However, this is how he uses it in MJ, p.326.

[61]C.f. MBI, pp.183-187. In an essay in memory of Bergson, Marcel says at the start: "As always in such circumstances, I note that what is so distant is at the same time quite close, immediate, present." C.f. "Marcel's Essay on Bergson," The Bergsonian Heritage, Thomas Hanna, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p.124.

> Between the objective identity that we can affirm in the world of tangible things and what I have called the felt quality of identity there is obviously a gap.[62]

Therefore we must think of the self in its "manifoldness". It should be noted that:

> At the level of feeling as such, quality (and most philosophers of the past have acknowledged this fact without, however, recognizing its implications) infringes upon, or one might even say usurps, the place of subjectivity as such.[63]

While I can readily see that it is possible, on one level at least, to acknowledge a gap between the colour I see and the colour as such, it is impossible in any sensible way to separate what I am from the pain that I feel: "The felt pain is an indissoluble unity."[64] This is the non-objective meaning of identity. I am my past, but in an ambiguous way.

Situation in Depth. The obvious gap between recognisable identity and felt identity may be explained in terms of profundity or depth. This gap for Marcel, is overcome in the metaphoric notions of the "tolerance" of the hotel, the "internalised surroundings" of the one who feels "at home," and in the spiritual epitome of these, the notion of "saintliness". These are notions of a situation in depth. Marcel gives two examples of profundity.

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[62] MBI, p.188.

[63] MBI, p.188.

[64] MBI, p.188. Marcel says in MJ, p.292 that "the notion of the body may function as a principle of identification." This is only true if it is the nonobjectifiable kind of incarnation which we suggested in the first part of this chapter. The notion of "my body," not "the body," is the significant one. The notion of "the body" would seem to sweep away the idea of identity; c.f. MBI, p.187.

The first is visual:

> The image I had in mind . . . was that of narrow tongues of water, like those which crisscross among clusters of Dalmatian islands, at the mouths of which one catches a sudden bewildering glimpse of the whole broad dazzle of the sea . . . This distant glimpsed prospect, this dazzling yonder, as one might call it, is not felt as being elsewhere; though we should have to describe it as a distance, yet we also feel it as intimately near to us . . .[65]

Thus, it is possible to see the "gap" as an "inner distance" like a "lost homeland of the exile".[66]

The other example Marcel gives points to this reality on a more personal level. He says that real charity is characterised by contact with the other (the element of susceptibility to influence) and patience (the notion of distanz). This charity must have a resource in myself of exactly the same nature; that is, I must both see myself objectively and yet retain a patient, sympathetic relation to myself, if I am to act charitably toward others. Only if I have come to the level of critical awareness of myself and have, at the same time, refused to disparage myself because of my weakness, can I have anything to offer to another. Marcel says that we "sin" both because we have cowered in naive prereflection and more often because we cast ourselves away in impatience when we see ourselves. It is in exactly the same ways that we sin toward others. Only a resilient self can reach out to another in the act of charity. Only this self can establish

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[65]MBI, p.192. Dalmatia is the coastal region of Yugoslavia, extending along Adriatic from Faime to Kotor.

[66]MBI, p.193. Here I am reminded that Arab refugee boys in Syria, when asked where their home is, reply, "Haifa," though they have never seen that city. This is the answer they have been taught. But Marcel insists that there is a difference between "nostolgia" and a youth's dream of a strange land.

an identity beyond the merely objective level--an identity of depth.[67]

F. Concluding Statement

This last illustration shows us that "being in a situation" involves being with other people. This is the creative level where the "I exist" really occurs. Sometimes it appears that I create myself when I reach out to another, while at other times it appears that I am the passive clay being molded into life form; neither of these are to be accepted in isolation or else we are back in the subject-object dilemma.[68] The key rather is the idea of mutuality of being and expression. Participation on the level of mutuality is both creative and self-creating. It is in an "influential" situation. A student of Marcel puts it briefly: "These unobjective relations are creative, for through them I create myself and help another to create his own freedom."[69]

This leads us to examine the level of a participation which is the mystery of personal communication. We

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[67] CF, pp.46-47. One cannot help but recall Jesus' recorded statement: "Love thy neighbor as thyself" and appreciate the significance of the analysis here. Note the ethical import of this "influential" approach. One must comment, however, that the prereflective state may not be subject to the category of sin for Marcel. He says in HV, pp.22-23 that most of our lives "are lived on the margin of reality like a sleepwalker." Such a person is thus not subject to grace.

[68] C.f. HV, p.25.

[69] Bernard G. Murchland, "The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel," The Review of Politics, Vol.XXI (April, 1959), p.343.

have seen that it is a mystery on the most elemental levels as I sensitively participate in myself and the world where I have my life. But the significance of the participation modulates to another more impressive key when it involves the interhuman. We must follow Marcel in his "wider empiricism" to take cognisance of "something like a direct participation of mind in mind as a primary datum of experience."[70]

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[70] Hocking, loc.cit., p.451. Hocking says that he and Whitehead in their own ways also reject the "code and double-translation" notion of communication; supra note 24 in this chapter.

"True individuality is possible . . . only as the fruit of a prior community in which reciprocal relationship is, in some measure, a reality."

Charles R. Stinnette, Jr.

CHAPTER VIII

MUTUAL ENGAGEMENT

A. Preliminary Remarks on Marcel and Buber

The concept of mutuality has filtered into widely separated schools of philosophy and theology in this century. Without doubt the late Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, is due primary credit for the propagation of this significant description and approach to interhuman experience. Yet Buber was by no means the first to recognise this factor which has become popularly known as the "I-thou" relation. Arriving at relatively similar conclusions on independent bases of investigation were Ferdinand Ebner,[1] Eberhard Griesebach, Karl Jaspers, Eugene Rosenstock-Huessy, Franz Rosenzweig, and Max Scheler.[2]

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[1] According to EBHD, pp.38-39, Marcel did not read Ebner's Wort und Liebe until "about 1935".

[2] Maurice S. Friedman., Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p.162n. It would be of interest to know whether Rosenzweig gave the idea to Buber in any way. Rosenzweig had a major influence on Buber. It would be of interest to know, also, how much influence Scheler had on Marcel in this matter. As we shall note, Royce and Hocking were influential on this point; also, cf. EBHD, pp.38-39.

This convergence of reflective scholarship adds credence to the validity of the notion.

Maurice Friedman, the Buber scholar, in Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue, suggests that not only the above names, but equally Gabriel Marcel, developed this notion of intersubjectivity (which we are here calling mutuality) on his own impulse. He reports that though Marcel's thought and even his terminology is remarkably alike to Buber's, that when these two finally met in Paris in 1951, Marcel told Buber that his Journal Metaphysique was not at all influenced by Buber's Ich und Du.[3] The Marcel student, Sam Keen, says of Marcel that "as early as 1915 he made use of the distinction between relations between an I and a thou and an I and a he." Keen adds that "later" the notion became famous "largely through the work of Martin Buber, whose I and Thou was published in Germany in 1932".[4] In view of the partiality of both Friedman and

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[3]Friedman goes on to joust with I.M. Bochenski's remark that Marcel's I-thou philosophy was "eigenartig" or peculiar to him. Friedman insists that both Ebner and Buber were prior to Marcel in formulating this idea. The closest I can come to finding a claim by Marcel himself is his 1950 preface to Metaphysical Journal where he notes that "Meditations on the implications of the word 'with' . . . must in my opinion be counted among the most valuable contributions of the Metaphysical Journal," p.xii. Marcel, too, claims that his play Le Palais de Sable, written not later than 1913, presents a "definite reality" as the "bond between things--what I later came to call 'intersubjectivity,'" EBHD, p.34. Marcel claims something of the same for Le Quatuor en fa Dièze and L'Iconoclaste, written during World War I; c.f. this claim for Le Quatuor more explicitly in MBI, pp.181-182.

[4]Op.cit., p.29. It is not clear whether Keen is claiming that Buber was later or simply that the notion became widely known at a later date.

Keen for their respective mentors, it seems safe to assume that when some credit is given to the other scholar that the evidence is solid.

I should not like to become enbroiled in a "tempest in a teacup" argument over whether Buber or Marcel was first in point of time to investigate the notion of mutuality. There can be no doubt that it received its most extensive elaboration and most noted treatment in Buber's work. Nor can it be successfully denied that his writings made it a part of the philosophical and theological vocabulary in our time. But I do regard Friedman's assertion of priority in time, on behalf of Buber, as subject to doubt. The only chronological priority assured for Buber, and admittedly it is an important primacy, is that the Journal Metaphysique was published in 1927, four years after Ich und Du. It must be kept in mind that the procrastination involved on Marcel's part was primarily because he originally meant this diary to form the basis for a systematic work; it was not intended for publication until Marcel realised that his style did not lend itself to systematic presentation and that he perceived a thought form repellent to systematic formulation. If we believe Marcel to be a man of integrity, then the fact that the following is dated 23rd August, 1918, is of no small importance:

> I glimpse a sort of slow transition from pure dialectics to love, in the measure in which the thou becomes thou more and more profoundly. For it begins so to speak by being essentially a him with the form of a thou. I meet a stranger on the train . . . And inasmuch as he, for me, is 'somebody,' I appear to myself as 'somebody else' . . . But it may well happen that I become more and more in the absolute which is unrelatedness and we cease more and more to be 'somebody' and 'somebody

> else'. We become simply 'us' . . . For me, the being I love is a third person in the least possible degree.[5]

I am not aware of the 1915 sources where Keen alleges that Marcel made the I-he and I-thou distinction. But this 1918 muse is impressive evidence that Marcel, driven by interest both in religious and parapsychical phenomena, had perceived the I-thou relation to a large extent.[6] Seymour Cain believes "participation" to be the "central idea of Marcel's Metaphysical Journal" and "the I-thou relation" to be the "most important development of this central idea".[7] With this I would concur. It may be admitted with Cain, that relatively Marcel has "neglected the realm of our relations with the natural world" when compared with Buber.[8] (Though what we have already said in regard to "being-in-a-situation" weakens that insight to some extent.) On the other hand, it should be pointed out, as Altizer does, that Buber, in comparison with Marcel, has failed to take sufficient account of the role played by "my body" in the intersubjective encounter.[9] This latter factor, as we have seen, is one of Marcel's main contributions to philosophy.

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[5] MJ, pp.146-147.

[6] C.f. MJ, pp.146-147, 157-158, 165, 199-200, 212, 219, 221, 258, 284-287, 291, 296, 302-303 and 316.

[7] Cain, Seymour, Gabriel Marcel (London: Bowes, 1963), p.35.

[8] Ibid., p.41.

[9] Op.cit., p.355.

B. Characteristics of Mutuality

Intersubjective participation may well be called mutuality or engagement. Such engagement rests on egos not preoccupied with themselves or cluttered with their own affairs. The person with a responsive ego has an "aptitude to give himself" which makes mutuality possible.

There are numerous examples of the nonparticipative type of person: The "poseur" who seems interested in others but in reality eventually shows himself to be primarily interested in the construction and maintenance of his own image. The person who claims his rights or the rights of others too boldly may come through the surface as one who might be called a "moral egocentric". The person who by certain ploys uses another for the sake of his own advancement is obviously at the opposite pole from the person who exhibits disponibilité. The acquaintance who asks with seeming interest about my health and then does not stop long enough to listen to my answer. The doctrinaire liberal or conservative who is perpetually shouting about the enfringement of his rights. The businessman who wines-and-dines me and then asks for "certain favours". All these live in the region of spectator-like detachment.[10] Even the mutuality of "complicity," as when a man tells an acquaintance where to get "black market coffee," does not meet the requirements of a "chez" relationship.[11]

There are certain characteristics of life which tend to cause us to deny and to betray the way of engagement. The community with an essentially dilettante approach

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[10] The last two paragraphs are essentially based on material in HV, pp.16ff.

[11] MBI, p.178.

to life is not virile enough to sort out the imposter from the authentic. Competition, when it intensifies self-consciousness through comparison with others, tends to separate by that very process. A situation where men are so many dots on a chart or integers in a column forces a wedge between any potential engagement. Marcel sees these features as societal factors leading to the essential separation of men and, hence, as factors that tend to degrade the men and the society in question.[12]

Mutuality escapes the grasp of objective definition. Examples give us the opportunity of description: Encounter at a deep level does not appear to be simply based on close physical proximity. When in the street or station I am jostled by hundreds of scurrying people, it is simply like objects bumping together until someone brings to the situation a level of inwardness by turning and saying in genuine fashion, "I beg your pardon."[13] Marcel notes that such a chance meeting may open up the chance for a "spark of spirituality," as when I indicate to the stranger that I am lost. Suppose he goes out of his way to help me get my bearings. Marcel comments:

> The stranger and I part almost certainly never to see each other again, yet for a few moments, as I trudge homewards, the man's unexpected cordiality makes me feel as if I had stepped out of a wintry day into a warm room.[14]

Marcel continues:

> On an occasion of such a sort, we have lingered for a moment on the threshold of intersubjectivity,

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[12] Again most of the points of this paragraph could be culled from HV, pp.16ff.

[13] Example from MBI, p.139.

[14] MBI, p.179.

> that is, of the realm of existence to which the preposition <u>with</u> properly applies, as it does not properly apply . . . to the purely objective world.[15]

On an even more profound level, Marcel speaks of "acts of recognition" as applicable to the matter of mutuality.[16] I have commented privately that Marcel is the kind of writer who makes a reader say, "Now that is what I had always thought but I could never seem to put it into words." Here the written material provides a mutuality in spite of physical distance. Likewise, a common cause or ordeal, Marcel notes, is often the internal "cement" which brings fellow factory workers, soldiers or prisoners of war into the area of comradeship.[17]

Marcel distinguishes between "ego-centrism" and "heato-centrism," (which is the ascription of one's own characteristics to another) and states that both cause inner darkness. He asserts that the category of the "hetero-centric" is the level of sightedness.[18] It would appear that this level can be summed up as follows: It is an openness to others even if they are strangers. It operates in spite of possible physical distance. It is an openness which makes it possible to internalise some external factor in common with another and thereby enter into a level which

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[15] MBI, p.180. Buber, too, sees mutuality as often unexpected.

[16] MBI, pp.139-140.

[17] C.f. MJ, p.146 on the importance of "Royce's triadism"; also, c.f. Hocking, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp.451ff on intersubjectivity as "here we are" with "here" as the so-called third party. For the notion of the common ordeal as "cement," MBI, p.180. We should note, as Professor Henderson has reminded, that the ordeal as often brings out the worst in a man.

[18] MBII, pp.7-8.

is "chez" rather than "le long du bord". It must be kept in mind that this "relation" is subject to many internal strains and external shocks that could destroy it.

Viewed from the spectators balcony, this notion appears to dwell on the border between the one and the many, between the subjective and the objective, between the finite and the infinite. Actually it cannot be thought as a category "in-between". It is rather a level of emphasis which oscillates from one side to another, not retaining its static position.[19] Marcel rejects the option of individuality versus absorption (monadism versus pantheism, which easily slip into one another).[20] The trans-subjective defies an objectively defined category. The I-thou is rather a certain existential dimension of our being with others.[21] To say "thou" is to inaugerate communion.

Marcel insists that if this becomes a clearly defined category the "other" becomes a thing and turns into a "fetish" or a "talisman". But he is really on the level of mutuality and reaching out for me as a thou. One cannot trust a "thing" but as Marcel says, "One can only trust

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[19] We must recall what has been said concerning the indefinable self; supra, chapter VI.

[20] Urmson, ed., loc.cit., says: "For all his [Marcel's] stress on the dimension of subjectivity, he remains profoundly hostile to any sort of radical individualism, which he would judge false to the subtle actualities of the human situation." Supra, note 9 in chapter on "unitary existence" for Marcel's position concerning pantheism.

[21] This is the inter-personal aspect of the same phenomenon we have examined on the level of the intra-personal relation and global participation; supra, pp.111-118 in chapter on "Influential Participation".

a 'thou,' a reality capable of fulfilling the function of a 'thou,' of being invoked . . ."[22] So to the summation above must be added the negative stipulation that mutuality is not a definable thing in time and space, for the reason that it is not an "in-between" category between the subjective and the objective. It is rather a relationship which at any given time stresses one side more than the other. Yet this is grossly inadequate, even as a description, forcing us to bring in the notion of "presence," which fills up, rather than cuts between, the subject and object categories.

C. Here We Are!

It is obvious that the stress in this philosophy, in traditional terms, would be on subjectivity. But Marcel does not wish to find himself in the cul-de-sac which characterised the philosophy of Kierkegaard until the Dane took the leap of faith. If for Kierkegaard truth rests with the existing individual in his painful isolation, Marcel seeks to show to the contrary that only when the existing individual lives for another does he gain his own being. He speaks clearly on the matter:

> There is a sense in which it is literally true to say that the more exclusively it is I who exist, the less do I exist; and conversely, the more I free myself from the prison of ego-centrism, the more do I exist.[23]

Marcel affirms the priority of coesse. Buber believed that man discovers his "I" in the "thou" of the other:

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[22] CF, p.135.

[23] MBII, p.34.

"In the beginning is relation."[24] In 1918, Marcel said the same thing: "I only become a given person for myself through the mediating idea of the other for whom I am a given person."[25] This is made exact in 1950: "The fact is that we can understand ourselves by starting from the other, or from others, and only by starting from them."[26]

Marcel affirms the primacy of coesse for being, also. "Esse est coesse." Marcel says:

> I concern myself with being only in so far as I have a more or less distinct consciousness of the underlying unity which ties me to the other beings of whose reality I already have a preliminary notion.[27]

This does not necessarily mean that "being is mutuality". The true case is much more subtle. Certainly it is on the way to being, in its rejection of the absolute primacy of the individual per se and in its movement toward a "felt density" with others. To completely identify being and intersubjectivity, however, is to take a stance one cannot find in this world and to halt something that is alive and vibrating right in its tracks. We must remember our itinerant condition which has no permanent resting place where from a spectator's vantage point we can make such an assessment. Rather than make this identification, we must "emphasise the presence of an

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[24] R.G. Smith, Martin Buber (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1966), p.17, quoted from Buber's I and Thou (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1937), p.18.

[25] MJ, p.145; also, c.f. HV, pp.13-28 on "The Ego and Its Relation to Others."

[26] MBII, p.8.

[27] MBII, p.17.

underlying reality that is felt . . ."[28]

We may even call this "underlying reality" a "presence," since it is necessary to identify it in some way. In the Gifford Lectures, Marcel distinguished between "object" and "presence". Already we have mentioned the fact that mutuality does not necessitate physical proximity. Probably I am "closer" to my wife sitting in a room two blocks away than I am to the stranger reading a book only a table away in the same reading room. Possibly a model will illumine the point: The notion of presence is similar to the notion of charm; the latter is a kind of the former. Now just what is objective about charm? Many physical things might be mentioned: a smooth gait, a straight posture, a good complexion, etc. But once we have named all these factors, have we defined charm? Can charm be acquired by attaining a list of goals? "Ridiculous!" says Marcel, "In fact the whole notion of teaching charm, as of teaching people to make their presence felt, is the very height of absurdity."[29] Yet

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[28] MBII, p.17. Marcel does say that his is a metaphysic of 'we are' as opposed to Descartes' 'I think,' MBII, p.9. Altizer says that Buber, but not Marcel, repudiates the "metaphysical category," op.cit., p.355. At least I agree with Altizer's further remark that "one of the most original and fascinating dimensions of his [Marcel's] thought is the primal correlation he establishes between 'my body,' 'the thou', and 'being'." p.355.

[29] MBI, p.206; c.f. MJ, pp.300-302, for a full elaboration of the matter of charm. Note the relation here between act and being. Act is related but does not fully encompass or explain being; c.f. pp.104-119. The oft made distinction between the comic and the comedian or between a person who tells jokes and an amusing person is appropriate here. Some stage comics have no sense of humour when off the stage. Marcel refers to a charm which is always there because it is integral to the person. He would not deny that

Marcel would insist with equal firmness that this charming presence is not just a subjective feeling I have about another person. Charm intends a nonobjective universality. Marcel says: "Instead of subjectivity, we should think of intersubjectivity."[30] Yet this is not a content transferred back and forth, for we are in a "higher realm of being".[31]

It will be instructive to recall the model of "my body" which, though it has an obvious objectivity, can never be turned into that which is purely outside me. It retains a level at which I am irretrievably a participant with that body. In the say way, charm as a form of presence, retains an inexplicable mystery beyond the grasp of analysis, even though it is associated usually with a set of objective acts and attitudes.

Marcel carries out the consequences of saying "thou" to the consideration of immortality. We have noticed Marcel's refusal to admit that being <u>is</u> intersubjectivity. But he does consider mutuality when it becomes love. It then becomes "perennial". Can my "thou" ever perish? On the ontological level Marcel believes he has reason to doubt it:

> From the moment when my affirmation becomes love, it resigns in favour of that which is affirmed,

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learning may enhance a quality to a large extent, but he would strongly refuse to admit that charm is simply the sum of all acquired attributes. A charming person is more like a comedian than a comic.

[30] MBI, p.207.

[31] MBI, p.207.

of the thing which is asserted in its substantial value.[32]

Love suppresses the dialectic and becomes faith. As such we can say there is something deathless about the loved one, without being subjectivist. Thus, the inner logic of mutuality at the level of love says: "'Thou, at least, thou shalt not die'."[33] But Marcel increases a spirit this side of dogmatism when he reaches this tenuous level of investigation. This is in the face of a philosophy already marked by its lack of dogmatism.

D. Concluding Statement

Can we say, in words variant from, but reminiscent of, Kierkegaard, that "truth is intersubjectivity"? The answer in Marcel's case may well be in the affirmative, though he is suspicious of any compact formulas. He does say that Royce rightly showed that "the man who is engaged in the search for truth enters into an idea community."[34] Truth is related to mutuality in that it is only in intrapersonal and interpersonal intercourse that it is found. But we have not said all. Truth is not simply a certain content; it is an "openness" which may be known in mutuality. Truth is a value which must be followed after as two climbers going up opposite sides of the same hill linked together by wireless communication.[35] Truth then appears

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[32] MBII, p.62; also, c.f. MJ, pp.22-23.

[33] MBII, p.62. Le Palais de Sable, Marcel's 1913 play, considers mutuality on this level.

[34] MBI, pp.72-73.

[35] MBI, pp.70-76.

to be the motivation, the goal and the vantage point they have reached together; it is both a nostalgic "reminiscence" and a "distant gleam that beckons us".[36] It is that which is the "intelligible background" to interhuman engagement.[37]

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[36] MBI, pp.70-76.

[37] MBI, p.57. Lauer, op.cit., p.157, is correct to say that in the philosophical search for truth the climate of arbitrariness in some phenomenology has been ameliorated by the "social development" in Marcel and Merleau-Ponty.

PART TWO

THE ETHICS OF RECREATIVE BEING

"As having nothing, and yet possessing all things."
II Corinthians 6:10

CHAPTER IX

BEING AND HAVING: THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR ETHICS

A. Introductory Remarks

There is no separate division of Marcel's thought under the heading "moral philosophy". This is in line with his recognition that life is of one piece. Moral insights are gradually shaded into aesthetic judgement, metaphysical reflections and religious suggestions.[1] Certainly the more decisively ethical essays, as found in Men Against Humanity and Decline of Wisdom, are not intended to be diversionary from his main "lifework".[2] It is also congruent with his aversion to the artificiality of much academic thought that Marcel exposes his reluctance to consider moral decision in a compartment apart from the rest of the disciplines. This is not to say that Marcel would fail to recognise the expedience of specialisation

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[1] Marcel says that his own metaphysical and ethical thoughts are inextricably tied together, forming an "unbreakable link," MAH, p.l. Supra, notes 42 and 43 in chapter on "Secondary Reflection".

[2] This term for the man and his work gathered from Altizer, loc.cit.

within study of human knowledge; rather it is to say that any lecture in ordinary philosophy given by him would likely encroach on the territory of moral philosophy. I suspect that in academic circles Marcel would be an insistent advocate of interdisciplinary discussion.

Marcel is only one of a contemporary group of thinkers, particularly existentialists, who have subjected the attempt to syphon all the life out of moral reflection to a fundamental criticism. Summarily, this group asserts that

> Human freedom and decision cannot be restricted to a certain region in a universe already fixed and established that can be simply registered by a purely theoretical reason apart from all choice.[3]

Many, the logical analysts in particular, regard such a procedure as illegitimate and confusing. For example, Zuurdeeg would prefer Marcel to make a clear distinction in his work between ethical analysis and moral judgement.[4] Based on more distinctly psychological interest, Patricia Sanborn says the same in so many words: The merging of "ontological and ethical concerns" in Marcel causes ethics to exist insecurely "in the shadow of ontology". This mixing, Sanborn believes, results in the two-pronged misfortune of an attenuated psychology threatened by immanent ethical judgement and a submerged ethics unable to serve the central function they should attain.[5] It is not

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[3] John Wild, Human Freedom and Social Order: An Essay in Christian Philosophy (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1959), p.153.

[4] Supra, note 45 in chapter on "Philosophical Language".

[5] Op.cit., pp.18 and 128-131. This is a rather common complaint among certain analytically orientated scholars.

altogether clear that mere analysis will solve this particular conflict between existentialists and analysts. Zuurdeeg, attempting to find a common meeting ground, suggests that there is a "heuristic . . . not intrinsic" relation between analysis and conviction.[6]

It is not amiss to propose that Marcel's ethics do "live in the shadow of his ontology." Marcel has not presented himself to his audience primarily as an ethicist.[7] Marcel's early interest in the issue of faith, joined with his "continual and central metaphysical preoccupation,"[8] appears to have seemingly left the more distinctly moral concerns a ragged orphan. Thus, Marcel's commentators have given only subordinate attention to Marcel as a moral philosopher.

It is not the intention to specifically oppose this weight of opinion. It is the intention, however, to claim and to demonstrate two points: First, Zuurdeeg is absolutely correct when he notes that Marcel's writings are "full of relevant ethical analysis" and that these have made "notable contributions to the cause of ethical analysis".[9] Second, it is apparent, once attention is given, that Marcel's ethical concern is an integral part of his whole religiously orientated philosophy. That is to say, it is precisely as a philosopher open to religious insight beyond mere analysis, that Marcel makes an even more significant contribution.

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[6] Zuurdeeg, op.cit., p.265.
[7] Ibid., p.258.
[8] PE, p.95.
[9] Loc.cit.

There may even be call to speculate about centrality of ethical concern in Marcel. It is clear that an argument could be presented on this score which, to my knowledge, has not been made. The true significance of such speculation is not the classification of Marcel as a thinker, but rather the discovery of a clue to why Marcel has found a ready response and, equally important, in some, a critical aversion in this troubled century.

One commentator has stated that Marcel's discussions of fidelity and suicide are "incidental accompaniment and furnishings to disclosures of an entirely other order."[10] Having admitted that Marcel's essays which bear directly on ethical matters dwell in the shadow of ontology, it is clear that the reason is not the one here given. The reason, as we have already indicated, is that Marcel has sought to do more than simply establish a set of ethical rules. This is how he sees the task of the ethicist; he has understood his role to lie in less confined and more spiritual areas.

The statements of another writer on Marcel as an ethicist are significant. He knows Marcel well enough to write creatively with Marcel as his inspiration. In Ralph Harper's, The Sleeping Beauty, this incisive comment is made: "Marcel is first and foremost a philosophical moralist."[11] Such a statement leads us to give further attention to this point, even if we must regard this statement as an exaggeration of Marcel's intention, if not of his place in twentieth century philosophy.

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[10] Ostermann, "Gabriel Marcel: The Discovery of Being," Modern Schoolman, Vol.XXXI (January, 1954)), p.102.

[11] Op.cit., p.31.

In 1950, Marcel said:"It seems to me today . . . that the keynote of my dramatic work is ethical."[12] Based on our analysis which shows Marcel's drama and philosophy to be inextricably bound together,,Harper's point seems to be strengthened. Harper himself understands this relationship of drama and philosophy in Marcel.[13] Indeed, Harper attempts to work out the chronology of Marcel's ethical work: "He has moved from the epistemological to the metaphysical, by way of the ethical."[14] Harper believes that the ethical writings dominated the thirties. This was for a specific reason: In the thirties the "carefreeness of the twenties' was finally nurturing rotten fruit; the depression, broken international pacts, broken private lives, civil wars, the great war itself."[15] Promises of convenience, life from day to day, submerging of natural loyalties--all were part of this era for many. What was lacking? A fidelity cognisant of something permanent in the bond. Harper puts it well and in line with our own thesis:

> Marcel's basic ethical autonomy of fidelity and betrayal can now be understood in terms of a 'phenomenology of being and having' which reflected the moral change of interest from possessiveness to reality, from the twenties to the thirties.[16]

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[12]"The Drama of the Soul in Exile," preface to Three Plays (London: Seeker, 1952), pp.33-34.

[13]Loc.cit.

[14]Ibid., p.34.

[15]Ibid., p.35.

[16]Ibid. I view this as an important supportive statement for a conclusion I had already drawn, though I believe the importance of Marcel's effort is not confined to two decades of this century.

To this insightful assessment of Harper's concerning the earlier Marcel there needs to be this additional provision: Marcel's moral concern has followed him into the second half of the twentieth century. The works, Men Against Humanity and Decline of Wisdom are basically ethical documents. It will be our task to say exactly what we mean by that. Suffice it to say here that the concern for man's life in the technological age, which pervades the pages of these offerings of the fifties, is directly in line with the musings of the thirties. The ontological basis is identical. It is a phenomenology of being and having which reveals the potential disaster and glory of man in the machine age.

Harper's analysis is extremely important. I disagree that Marcel is "first and foremost" an ethicist, if by that we refer to Marcel's intention. Marcel desires first of all to be a witness to spiritual reality. But it is true to say that it is in the study of situations laced with moral dilemmas that this reality appears for Marcel. Thus, in the course of facing toward the "mystery of being" Marcel's works provide direct assistance and indirect implications for approaches to the more specifically moral issues. In other words, Marcel's "concrete approaches" to mystery tend to be moral in nature. Harper states what we are trying to say with exact precision: "Marcel is a concrete philosopher; and his philosophy of presence is an ethic of existence."[17] D.D. Raphael comes close to the same understanding. "What Marcel calls metaphysics is a philosophy of man rather than a philosophy of nature, a philosophy of conduct rather than a philosophy of knowledge."[18]

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[17] Op.cit., p.30. Underlining mine.

[18] The Paradox of Tragedy (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), p.91. This dichotomy is acceptable only if we read it in terms of emphasis rather than absolute separation.

B. Initial Reflections

It is not always clear what Marcel thought about moral matters during the period of his early writings. It is probable that the study of Josiah Royce enabled Marcel to free himself from the strictured ethical analysis of Immanuel Kant. There is no doubt that Henri Bergson's distinction of the "open" and the "closed" moralities had a profound impact on Marcel's thought. Nevertheless, the early writings present us with a task of interpretation.

In 1909, Marcel wrote of "the eternal truth which alone can ground ethics."[19] That truth was discovered in a voluntary move which landed one in the realisation of the nothingness of my simple individuality uncorrelated to what is beyond me in time and space. He asserted:

> Nothing <u>is</u> outside the eternal subjectivity . . . If life has a meaning, it can surely be only this: reducing whatever is nature in us to being the willed and conscious expression of that eternal thought; outside of this, no morality.[20]

This statement would seem to obscure our position that there is no "early" or "later" Marcel. But in spite of the obvious abstraction and voluntarism, echoing the thought of Hegel and Schopenhauer, one should not miss the emphasis on the subjective person in this early effort to find a key to meaning. It is certainly true to say that from an early age there was in Marcel a distrust of abstracting the ethical thinker from his <u>lebenswelt</u>.

The sparce but crucial jottings in the <u>Metaphysical Journal</u> have coherent place in Marcel's ethical pattern.

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[19] PF, p.35.

[20] <u>Ibid</u>., p.36

It will become clear that these notes fit snugly into the "being and having" pattern, though they antedate these structurasations.

There seems to have been two questions, on the fringe of moral concern, which caught Marcel's attention at this time. First, can morals be thought of as a separate discipline? Second, what is the relation between the ethical and the religious modes of life?

The first question has already been dealt with in the introductory remarks to this subject when it was implied that Marcel refused to allow moral concern to be the sole property of the professor down the corridor whose office door is marked "Moral Philosophy". But certain remarks in the Journal must be interpreted if it is to be held that Marcel has consistently held this position.

The remarks to which reference is made cluster about the spectre of the Kant of the Practical Reason. Marcel states that "autonomy" is "essential" to morals.[21] He is primarily agreeing with the Kantian distinction between religion and morality, but he also means that morals is definitely a separate discipline from all other subjects. Since this is exactly opposite to what was intimated above, the need for interpretation appears: Marcel means to say that morals, traditionally understood, is a division of thought having its own self-contained identity. The real point, however, is that Marcel regards this position as totally inadequate. It is clear that Marcel is pointing toward a moral concern which is correlated with the search for meaning in existence.

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[21] MJ, p.267. There is a 1925 note on this page stating that "all this seems to me very obscure and questionable," but it is not clear precisely what Marcel means by this statement.

Marcel's criticism of Kantian ethics makes this contention plain. He describes Kantian autonomous ethics as a technical and rational attempt to form universal judgements. Since this leaves out the issue of feelings, as too contingent to be abstractly formulated, Marcel admitted then to himself that "deep down Kantian rationalism is becoming increasingly foreign to me."[22] Fortunately, Marcel's demurral to the Kantian position later developed more depth than a certain inner disquiet.

Marcel's decisive cleavage with Kant on morals is that "ought" always carries "can" along with it.[23] Marcel insists that enablement to fulfill a demand is on quite another level than the recognition that the demand impinges on me. There is not any "technique for morals, there is no infallible way of inciting me to will the good."[24] Kant says that the "categorical imperative" is coincident with the power to attain the end of its demand. Marcel replies, "My essential quarrel is with the legitimacy of that claim."[25] Marcel sees what Kant did not: this as a "transition" rather than a coincidence. In this way, Marcel says that Kant, as the supreme examplar of autonomous ethics, seems to have given an "artificial and juridical" answer to a question which primarily involves the

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[22] MJ, p.211.

[23] MJ, p.213. Schmitz, op.cit., p.132, in an effort to parallel Socrates and Marcel, nevertheless, contrasts them on the matter of the rationality of morality. In contrast to Socrates, Marcel sees a gap which often protrudes between the knowing and the doing of the good.

[24] MJ, p.214. Marcel is not altogether sure Kant would have disagreed with that.

[25] MJ, p.215.

"spiritual commerce between beings".[26]

The question of whether or not ethics is a concern separate or integral to religion is simply a more concentrated form of the first question about the autonomy of ethics. In the Journal, Marcel makes it explicit that religion and morals were two different modes of life. His separation of the two is rather severe.[27] Speaking of Royce's ideal of loyalty, he said: "Though the notion of universal loyalism has an ethical value that is incontestable, I think it is foreign to religion."[28] If this notion is foreign to religion in Marcel's view, we may be certain that the usual interpretation of the Kantian ethical notion would be even further removed. Indeed, Marcel sounds exactly like the Kierkegaard of the Stages, which he had not yet read, when he says: "Belief in the strict sense suppresses all . . . preliminary dialectics; and inversely, the dialectics are only possible when pure belief is not achieved."[29] This statement from a wider context than our immediate concern, serves, nevertheless, to confirm the point of the apparent separation of ethics and religion in Marcel.

But again interpretation is necessary. These statements obviously refer to an ethics schematically understood. It is an ethical position which can be systematically formulated from eternal laws, passed on by repitition, and lived out on the basis of conformity, which

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[26] MJ, p.211.
[27] C.f. MJ, p.267.
[28] MJ, p.272.
[29] MJ, p.68.

Marcel regards as foreign to religious life and thought. But Marcel, like Kierkegaard, sees this as a totally inadequate conception of ethics, to say nothing of life in the presence of God. More precisely, these two modes of life are bound up together and can be separated only in an artificial way. Marcel is at one with Kierkegaard in seeing the key to the moral dilemmas in the life of faith. The crucial difference to be noted with Kierkegaard, however, is Marcel's exploration in the regions of ontology in an effort to find faith without a "leap in the dark". It can be said that Marcel's "leap" consists of an initial admiration (which is conversely a refusal to fall into solipcism) of his situation in life. Rather than ascetically equating aesthetic taste with a sensualistic attitude, as in Kierkegaard, Marcel is willing to suggest an analogy between the recognition of "aesthetic values" with the realisation of "moral values".[30] Later on he makes it a decisive aspect of his philosophy to see certain works of art as a "witness" to that which is ethical and more.[31]

It is apparent that the notion of intersubjectivity provides the bridge which spans this gap between aesthetics, ethics and ontology climaxing in faith.[32] It is not without significance that the most glaring weakness in Kierkegaard's work is his inability to get outside himself

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[30] MJ, p.219. Marcel does admit a certain "unease" about this analogy in a note on the same page.

[31] Bach's later works, for example.

[32] C.f. MJ, pp.219-223.

in this world. When Marcel, on the other hand, speaks of the intersubjective presence of charm as being "incompatible with indiscretion," I take him to mean that in two ways.[33] First, as he means it in the context of its use, charm is not a virtue which I can acquire and consequently charm is "beyond" the level of ethics understood as a teachable discipline.[34] More important, I interpret Marcel to mean that charm, as a positive mode of being-in-relation, is "incompatible" with a refusal to act in an ethical fashion. In this interpretation, ethics take on the element of the spiritual. I understand that Marcel would view charm as having the same level of existence as joy, of which he says: "All that is done in joy has a religious value; done in joy means done with the totality of one's being."[35] If our interpretation of the lack of coexistence between charm and indiscretion is correct, Marcel is consistent to doubt whether one can do evil joyfully or, which is to say the same, with all one's soul. Certain "ethical types" are not charming; this is because they are discreet in the sense of having. Other "charming types" are not at all ethical; their charm will eventually be seen as a facade. If this interpretation of the intersubjectively orientated features of charm and joy is correct, the answer would rest

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[33] MJ, p.301.

[34] Supra, notes 29,30 and 31 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".

[35] MJ, p.236. After writing this I discovered that John B. O'Malley takes similar position on charm and its relation to joy; c.f. The Fellowship of Being (The Hague:Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp.97ff and 126ff. This would explain Marcel's problem, voiced in the Journal, concerning why hatred and envy "do not bear on the idea of being" as does love. It should be added, however, that Marcel is always willing to allow for the possibility of daemonic or surd evil; c.f. MJ, p.223. Professor Henderson has noted that, indeed, the Nazis were without joy.

in the fact that a certain way of acting ethically is so integral to a person's being that it affects both his being-toward-others and his being-toward-God in either a positive or negative way.

Actually, this argument rests a very great deal on certain passages in the Journal which may not be able to bear the weight of the argument. Put in more precise terms, the whole of Marcel's work points toward the fact that he is primarily interested in a philosophy that borders on the ultimate religious questions. His method of taking up these matters, especially in the material which follows the Journal, but as we have shown in the Journal also, is to do research into the life of the interpersonal. When studied, it readily appears that these are studies fraught with ethical implications. Marcel's point, however, is that he is not interested to do this research merely for the sake of formulating a new ethical system. Our point is that the ethical and the spiritual are so coincident in Marcel's philosophy that separation, even for the sake of analysis, is inappropriate. Also, it is crucial to note what most commentators have failed to realise, that Marcel's phenomenological explorations follow what has normally been called a moral route.

Possibly we can clarify this matter by noting the distinctions made by H.D. Lewis. He argues for himself that, "There is no strict argument from moral objectivity to religion or any similar explicit dependence of ethics as such on religion."[36]

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[36]H.D. Lewis, Philosophy of Religion (London: The English Universities Press, 1965), p.197.

Lewis attacks a position he attaches to Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr to the effect that ethics are based on or dependent on religion for the reason that we could not even speak of right and wrong to the completely irreligious man or society.[37]

Marcel would be able to accept Lewis' position only if it were made clear to him that a system of morals was to be contrasted with religion as a quest for God. He could only accept the position attributed to Brunner and Niebuhr if the term "dependent" rather than "based," on religion were used and if it were made clear that the definition of religion extended far beyond the Christian religion. In this manner of speaking, Marcel might find himself taking up a middle ground between these two poles.

The real problem in the analysis of Lewis, as Marcel would see it, is this traditional way of stating the question. If the question of the relation between religion and ethics is asked in this manner, as we have done for the sake of dialogue, it is impossible for Marcel to give a precise answer. As a matter of fact, Marcel's philosophy stands as a rebuff to the question so formulated. For at the level of aesthetic and ethical witness, both intersubjective phenomena, Marcel has listened for hints of a transcendent element inherent within these so-called stages or disciplines. He has discovered that art without creative inspiration is no art at all. More to our point, he has realised that ethics per se are only self-creating. But such ethics are "metaphysically insufficient" for this ethics must have lost that central aspect of 'requirement'

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[37] Ibid., pp.262-263.

without which the ethical collapses.[38] Only an ethical concern which in itself points beyond itself has the demand which merits our attention. Here the ethical becomes a "concrete approach" to the apprehension of being.

C. Scale of Having

It is necessary for us to give careful attention to Marcel's fruitful differentiation between "being and having". Since most levels of "having" may be considered objectively, it is only proper that we begin with an analysis of this side of the polarity. Later, by elimination and allusion we may refer to being.

All of Marcel's thought may be unified along the lines of "having" in tension with "being". The distinction is roughly the sams as has been outlined in Marcel's more widely known analysis of mystery and problem.[39] The juxtaposition of "being and having" has certain virtues, from our point of view, however, which do not reside in the mystery-problem differentiation. First, it does not force us to deal with the difficult notion of "mystery," which is a "loaded" word in the English language.[40] Second, though it has been argued above that Marcel's thought always has an ethical bearing, the ethical implications of "being and having" are more immediately apparent than in the case of "mystery and problem". Third, I suggest

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[38] MJ, pp.91-92.

[39] Supra, chapter on "Ontological Mystery." Keen, op.cit., p.14 shows how this runs parallel to many other polarities in Marcel's thought.

[40] Marcel, for example, would not want it associated with the Thomist usage of the term.

that "being and having" is primarily an ethical category, though to my knowledge Marcel never says that himself.[41] Both "being-having" and "mystery-problem" are unifying elements in Marcel's reflection but while the latter may find easy application to the so-called "God problem" or the so-called "problem of evil," it is clear that "being-having" more readily fits the more distinctly ethical sphere.

It is necessary to emphasize that this allocation of "mystery-problem" to the religious question and the identification of "being-having" as an ethical category could lead us easily to a great misunderstanding. Marcel himself makes no such simple cleavage. But I would insist that this analysis does on the whole fit into Marcel's usage of these categories and, further, that this usage has great merit.[42]

It is significant that Marcel's distinction of "being and having" may penetrate a more diversified thought-world than the "mystery-problem" distinction. It has had some influence in the rapidly developing "existentialist psychotherapy" in Great Britain and the United States.[43] Since Marcel, upon reflection, believes that his "thoughts

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[41] Markus, loc.cit., comes close to saying this when he notes that this category is "fundamental where relations between persons is concerned".

[42] C.f. MJ, p.152 where Marcel first uses the "am-have" polarity to speak of a God who can "never be a third in relation to the ego-subject ego-object dyad".

[43] Supra, note 25 in "Indefinable Self" chapter. This is not to separate "problem and mystery" from "having and being". The latter is an aspect of the former, even as the "I-body" mystery is the primary illustration, and more, of the "having and being" relation.

on *having* originated from those I had previously pursued on Incarnation,"[44] it is appropriate that Merleau-Ponty should take up this theme in his now widely known discussions of incarnate existence.[45] Thus, this simple but profound distinction has received increasingly wide-spread attention.[46]

We must first note the *levels* of having. A clear case of "having" is, "I have a piece of paper." This is a case of obvious externality, of a *quid* to a *qui*, without much qualification. From this point "having" spirals upward until it is impossible to separate it from "being". To say, "I have poor health" involves us in a case where the actor is at the same time acted upon by certain external

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[44] EBHD, p.97.

[45] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p.174n, says that his ideas on being and having are "not incompatible with Marcel's though the terms are interchanged since Marcel takes having in a weak sense." Merleau-Ponty says he prefers to reserve "having" for an "idea" rather than a "house". Thus, "having' corresponds roughly with M. Marcel's being, and our being to his 'having'." Based on this explanation three comments are in order: First, Marcel uses "having" in more than the weak sense, as our discussion will indicate. This disagreement indicates that not only does Merleau-Ponty seem a bit niggardly in his recognition of Marcel's contribution, but also the recognition itself appears less than accurate. Second, Marcel's use of the terms seem more appropriate and in line with traditional usage, i.e., it is quite normal to use "having" in speaking of a house which I own. Third, the relationship which Merleau-Ponty sees between "I-body" and "being-having" is not coincidental. In Marcel's philosophy the one led to the other; *supra*, note 37 in chapter on "Unitary Existence".

[46] This distinction, however, as we have already pointed out, has failed to attract the wide attention which the distinction between problem and mystery has received.

forces, which nevertheless, are now integral to his life. It may be more than linguistic coincidence, for example, that in the case of hunger, where the French "J'ai faim" is equivalent to the English "I am hungry," indicates a level where it is difficult to separate possession from being possessed.[47] Marcel suggests that a man "has talent" but that he "is a genius".[48] I have already suggested the often mentioned difference between comic and comedian as a parallel case: a comic dons a mask, masters a routine, puts on an act; a comedian plays himself.

The ascent of "having" has become the simultaneous appearance of "being". We have reached a place where "having" and "being" seem to merge. It must be emphasized that Marcel is reluctant to go beyond this point. Certainly analysis can carry us no further, in Marcel's view. This kind of thought, if it attempts to extend its powers to discover where being emerges in its purity above all having, succeeds only in taking a chilly plunge down the elevator shaft to the first level of having. Such a method is, according to Marcel, the primary heresy of most philosophical and theological systems of history. Put bluntly, to

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[47]This illustration from Martin Jarrett-Kerr, "Being and Having: The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel," Theology, Vol.L (October, 1947), p.377.(Professor Henderson has noted that in Gaelic, "Tha an" plus "acras orm" means "The hunger is on me.") This is one of the first, if not the first, study of Marcel in English. It fastened on a crucial aspect of his thought.

[48]BH, p.152. This, at least, is habitual to English usage. This is the same distinction Marcel made concerning charm; c.f. notes 29, 30 and 31 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".

say, "I conceive of Being Itself," is analytically on the same level as, "I have a piece of paper." It is the level of external juxtaposition and it remains as far away from religion and ethics as possible.

This is a crucial point for an understanding of any consistent ethical position Marcel may assume. All that has been said concerning problem and mystery is applicable here.[49] Knowing that analysis can proceed no further than to establish a tension between "being and having," it is necessary to call to mind the meaning of "secondary reflection" in Marcel's philosophy.[50] It is this type of thought which must come into play at this level, for the reason that thought both demands to continue and yet cannot continue except in a new key.

If Marcel has no philosophy of "Being Itself," it is because he has too keen an insight into the possessive nature of reality as man knows it. John Macquarrie is correct to say that Marcel never reaches a break with "having"; but being may be, in Macquarrie's words, "transformed by being" so that the "sharp distinction of the self and its objects gives way to reciprocity."[51] This transformation occurs at the level of intersubjectivity (or in the case of I-Body, intrasubjectivity), which is the closest man comes to "Being Itself". Esse est Coesse. This is the level where Marcel's ethical thought finds its achievement. But before that level is discussed more fully,

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[49] Supra, chapter on "Ontological Mystery" especially.

[50] Supra, chapter on "Secondary Reflection" especially.

[51] John Macquarrie, Twentieth Century Religious Thought, (London: SCM Press, 1963), p.360. As usual, there is precision in Macquarrie's description.

it is necessary to look at the existential aspects of "having" or at a "having" that ends there.

The level of "having" is the treacherous plateau of anxiety. It is an abyss on either side of which hang "rope of sand" ladders of desire and despair. Marcel describes desire as the precarious stage of "having" and "not having".[52] It is "strung up" on this tense polarity. To continue to climb is only to reach more intense plains of anxiety. To complicate the picture, however far up the heights of possession one has reached is exactly the height from which one is in danger of falling. Thus the experience of "rended" emotions when we are deprived of our possessions.[53] Marcel's analysis makes it clear that "our possessions tend to eat us us."

Increased having is the level of increasing boredom. There can be nothing new, only more of the same thing. Here Marcel's separation between desire and hope is significant. Enslavement to "having," the level where fulfilled desire only activates the appetite for more of the same, is the place where hope dies.[54] Marcel has commented: "Whatever can be catalogued is an occasion for despair?"[55] Experience that is (or has the potential of being)"established" leaves no room for hope; it becomes "Prufrock's world of trivial insignificance."[56]

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[52] BH, p.152; also, c.f. CF, p.71.

[53] MBI, p.98.

[54] HV, p.61; also, c.f. MAH, p.44.

[55] CF, p.70.

[56] Markus, op.cit., p.401.

It should be clear that having is the level of the problematic.[57] This technical level has the probable effect of causing men to equate having with happiness, for the reason that in many cases it does make the achievement of many of the external accoutrements of comfort possible.[58] The question is not one of either exalting technique or of debasing it; the question concerns what is its proper place. The girl who shunts aside religious and moral considerations to enter into a marriage of financial convenience has probably chosen to seek happiness on the level of "having"; the well-fixed young man who breaks with his possessions for the sake of "spiritual adventure" seeks happiness on a more internal level.[59] It is the inner exigence which achieves primacy in the second instance--the level where having may be transformed.

What then are the central characteristics of "having"? The answer to this may be discovered in the following paragraph from Marcel's "Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having" from a note dated 16th March, 1933:

> Everything really comes down to the distinction between what we have and what we are. But it is extraordinarily hard to express this in conceptual terms, though it must be possible to do so. What we <u>have</u> obviously presents an appearance of externality. In principle, what we <u>have</u> are things (or what can be compared to things, precisely in so far as this comparison is possible). I can only <u>have</u>, in the strict sense of the word, something whose

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[57] BH, p.172.

[58] MAH, p.44.

[59] C.f. MBI, pp.44-45. Marcel teaches that purely on the descriptive level there is a "transcendence" in the man's search that is absent from the girl's decision to marry. Marcel would urge, however, that a final judgement must include more than the external appearance of these acts.

> existence is, up to a certain point, independent of me. In other words, what I have is added to me; and the fact that it is possessed by me is added to the other properties, qualities, etc., belonging to the thing I have. I only have what I can in some manner and within certain limits dispose of; in other words, in so far as I can be considered as a force, a being endowed with powers. We can only transmit what we have.[60]

Stephan Strasser, in a careful bit of analysis, has separated the five characteristics of "having" which appear in the statement.[61] Summarising these in my own words, they are as follows: (1)The possessed object has at least partial externality from me. (2)Consequently, its existence is at least partially independent of me. (3)It has, therefore, some relation to the nature of things. (4)As such, it is potentially subject to disposal. (5)This disposal may take the form of transmission to another person or group.

On the other hand, having which moves towards being loses external, independent, objective disposable, transmittable attributes and is becoming internal, interdependent, subjective, indispensable and unsayable. There is no question of a set of opposites here. We never leave "having" behind. To do so would leave us with a new, abstract possession. Rather, there is a transformation of "having" into a "being" which <u>is</u> more and more.

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[60] BH, p.155.

[61] <u>The Soul in Metaphysical and Empirical Psychology</u> (Pittsburgh: Dusquesne University Press, 1957), p.72. I have inverted points one and two to fit the order of Marcel's usage, which is a better logical order also.

Marcel uses numerous metaphors to illumine this transition from "having" to "being". All are examples of his notion of participation: The relation of a violinist to his violin; the gardener to his garden; the farmer to the farm and the scientist to the laboratory.[62] But Marcel suggests the fact of "my ideas and opinions" as the "most concrete illustration" of his point.[63] When my ideas or opinions become my conscious possession they begin to hold a tyranny over me. This indicates to Marcel the need of distinguishing the ideologist from the thinker:

> The ideologist is one of the most dangerous of all human types, because he is unconsciously enslaved to a part of himself which has mortified, and this slavery is bound to manifest itself outwardly as tyranny . . . The thinker, on the other hand, is continually on guard against this alienation, this possible fossilising of his thought. He lives in a continual state of creativity, and the whole of his thought is always being called in question from one minute to the next.[64]

And what is this creativity of "being" as overcoming the lethargy of "having"?

> Wherever there is pure creation, having as such is transcended or etherialised within the creative act: the duality of possessor and possessed is lost in a living reality.[65]

We have arrived at the feature of Marcel's philosophy which binds it all together. The notion of creative being.

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[62] BH, p.165.

[63] BH, p.166.

[64] BH, p.166. Philosophy cannot be "had". Marcel fears the "eloquent amateur," MBI, p.212. Marcel says: "There is nothing less patentable than philosophy, notiong more difficult to appropriate," CF, p.61.

[65] BH, p.166. Underlining mine.

Gallagher, with Marcel's qualified approval, acknowledges it as the "central interpretative insight".[66] It is expressed by Gallagher as follows: "As soon as there is creation, in whatever degree, we are in the realm of being."[67] But Marcel's qualification in the forward to Gallagher's study is of equal interest for us. He says, after expressing "complete agreement" on the importance of Gallagher's identification of "creation" with "being" as central to his thought:

> But the converse is equally true: that is to say, there is doubtless no sense in using the word 'being' except where creation, in some form or other, is in view.[68]

But clearly a problem has arisen in the attempt to find "being" on the further side of "having". Marcel is capable of speaking about "pure creation".[69] He often has referred to the "saint" as that "extreme form" of person who "lives . . . his belief"; here "having seems really to pass into being."[70]

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[66] Op.cit., p.84. I gained this insight before I read Gallagher, but I shied away from the emphases because I fear it could easily be confused with the "ethics of creativeness" elaborated by Nicolas Berdyaev; c.f. The Destiny of Man, trans. Natalie Duddington (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937), pp.162ff. Marcel's notion is less distinctly intuitive in nature and thus, less arbitrary. This is why I prefer the term "recreative" in reference to Marcel's ethical position.

[67] Ibid., quoted from BH, p.150.

[68] Ibid., Marcel's Forward, p.xiii. It is important that someone take up the study of Marcel in relation to Whitehead, Bergson and their followers on this point.

[69] Supra, note 65.

[70] EBHD, p.100.

It would seem that Marcel is claiming that this pure vertical transcendence can engulf human life in this world. But this same philosopher is painfully aware that man always remains an "in-between" creature. The problem is to make intelligible the possibility of experienced transcendence, (the only kind we can know) while not robbing it of its authentic quality of being. "For in the last analysis our task is nothing less than that of perceiving in what fashion life can be organically linked with truth."[71]

D. Transformation of Having

We must return to Macquarrie's reference to the "transformation of having" for the answer in Marcel's understanding. First, we must understand in what sense it is true to say that "having" passes away and "being" awakens. Second, we must seek to understand in what manner it remains true to say that "having" always remains. We will discover that there are really two kinds of having in Marcel's understanding, a fact which he sometimes has not made evident, e.g., the case of the saint.

There is in Marcel's thought an external or closed "having". This is the "having" which is subject to transformation into "being" by participation in the objective. It is this "having" which carries with it all the inauthentic implications of anxiety, boredom and problematic living. In the sentence which follows the one which (as we have agreed with Gallagher) opens up the centrality of Marcel's thought, he speaks of this kind of having: "One difficulty arises from the fact that creation, in the finite sense of the word, is no doubt only possible in the midst of a kind of having."[72]

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[71] MBI, p.191. Underlining mine.

[72] BH, p.150.

There are two ways in which this external or closed having may be viewed. It may be viewed negatively as a threat or neutrally as the stuff out of which life is made. Marcel vacillates between these two views. This becomes even more apparent when this "having" is analysed in the later writings in terms of technique and the society it creates. (This will be considered more carefully in the next section.) What Marcel has tried to make clear in his later writings is that "having" in the second sense is the manner of "having" which we may affirm.[73] He has come to see the "immense area" we must "cede to the control of positive science".[74] But he is adamant in his characature of the threat of "having" even as he clarifies its virtue.[75] This threat is not that man "has," but that he comes to view himself as possessor rather than receiver-creator. But to the extent that Marcel continues to put "closed having," only, in the category of threat, he will continue to be misunderstood by some as a wailer against scientific achievement.

Clearly, Marcel has made the threat of closed or external "having" a preoccupation. We have characterised this threat as the failure to take an "objective view" to what is obviously external. This might be put in another way: The threat of "having" is its tendency to encroach on

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[73] MAH, p.62.

[74] Gallagher, op.cit., Marcel's Forward, p.xv.

[75] C.f. "The Sacred in the Technological Age," Theology Today, Vol.XIX (April, 1962), pp.27-38. This represents an advance over the thought of the Gifford Lectures at which time Marcel was still uncertain about the role of the technician in society, MBI, p.124.

my own personal perogatives. This way of saying it makes it clear why Marcel is wary, to say the least, of the modern sciences of sociology and psychology. As a matter of fact, I do not recall any place in his major writings where he has anything unqualifiedly good to say about either of these developing sciences. For Marcel the threat is not only that I identify myself with a "closed having" but that some scientist of the human person or group will attempt to treat me as something he possesses because he believes he has the "tooled potential" to completely explain me. It is this threat, recognised by most of the existentialists, which Marcel warns against with thoughtful passion. He regards this kind of eventas "having" in a sphere beyond its bounds. It is this kind of having which Marcel, without equivocation, calls "daemonic".[76] It will remain for us to ask later if Marcel has made it sufficiently clear that it is only the "having" that threatens, by being viewed in a nonexternal way or by focusing its attention on human elements outside its perspective, which must be transformed by being. This "having" which threatens is not different from all closed having; rather it is closed having unquestioningly obsessed with its own power. It is this "having" which being seeks to exorcise; it is willing to live in relation with a "closed having" that knows its limitations.

Previously we have tried to focus our attention on the way in which primary reflection may lead us to secondary reflection. In the same manner and for the same reasons, the notion of the threat of "closed having" guides us to the borders of thought about internal or "open having".

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[76] DW, p.18.

One of Marcel's later realisations, though implicit in his earlier writings, is that the qualities of recreative being "demand" the challenge which risk entails.[77] This risk is realised in tension with "closed having" at its nondaemonic levels. (Tension disappears in the appearance of the daemonic, for here polarities become antipathies.) This risk is never permanently transformed or converted into the realm of being. It remains there as the vital background of the transition to a new level which homo viator is only able to approximate. Marcel said of this kind of "having," again in the crucial locus referred to earlier, "The more creation can shake this off, the nearer it is to absolute creation."[78] But Marcel's later emphasis on the risk involved in fidelity, for example, makes this writer question whether Marcel would now accept that statement. Possibly it is absolute creation which involves the greatest risk of being stiffled by having. If I am correct, Marcel's later position is actually less mystical and more in tune with the alienation of our century.[79]

"Internal having" or "open having" may be translated into the new key of recreative being. Marcel's translator gives us the felicitous phrases, "ontological belonging" or "creative belonging" to express his meaning.[80] Marcel then says what for us is the crucial description of this radical departure from daemonic having: "The more one

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[77] EBHD, p.74.

[78] Supra, note 72.

[79] Our examination of "creative fidelity" will show that for Marcel risk can never be completely destroyed in this world.

[80] CF, p.97.

reflects on it, the more one is convinced, I believe, that the passage from constraint to freedom is accomplished in belonging." [81]

I interpret this "creative belonging" to be the possession of attachment by affirmation. It is on another level than "closed having" even of the tolerable variety. A couple of attitude-acts may serve to illucidate the meaning of this "having which I am".[82]

The attitude-act which Marcel introduces is of significant importance. It is admiration. A summary of Marcel's notes on the matter are in order: Admiration has enormous but unrecognised spiritual and metaphysical application. (I would add ethical, for I think it is included here.) It has the effect of lifting us. It moves us from the reductive to the expansive level. As an "irruption" in the mundane it pushes through the "hermetic" crust. It has a noncomparative character; insofar as it is a judgement, it is the "affirmation of a superiority which is . . . incomparable."[83] Analytical reflection will settle in afterwards, which may prove to have a "salutary role" of discrimination, but, on the other hand, may cause us to think that there is something objectionable and humiliating about the "responsive" attitude-act of admiration. On the other hand, renewed reflection will take me back to the "acceptance and consent" which is the inward, creative, free act. Here the normal levels have been transcended.

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[81] CF, p.97. Underlining mine.

[82] CF, p.97. The exact English translation: "belonging to what I am."

[83] C.f. CF, pp.47-51 for the basis of this analysis of admiration.

Marcel dares to speak of it as "miracle".[84] My incarnate state is not only objective, causal and analytic, it also harbours the possibility of surprise and wonder. The gracious receptionist at the information desk, by a certain inner response, escapes her "having" role and brings a breath of freshness to the smoke-filled lobby. This is transcendence at a low level, but it is a concrete "irruption" of being.

Another metaphor is that of testimony.[85] Suppose I am witness to an accident. This event alters my mode of being. I am not simply spectator or completely active free being. My being-in-the-world has become that of witness. "I am obliged to bear witness because I hold, as it were, a particle of light, and to keep it to myself would be equivalent to extinguishing it."[86] Mine is the role of creative receiver. There is a certain "having" which is the tension of my position: "My testimony bears on something independent from me and objectively real; it has therefore an essentially objective end."[87] But the key to my disposition (a word which in English has both inner and outer connotations) is at another level: "At the same time it commits my entire being as a person who is answerable for my assertions and for myself."[88] It is the "inward commitment" to treat this responsibility

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[84] CF, p.51.

[85] The core of this paragraph is from PE, pp.70-76. We take up the broader aspects of "witness" in the next section.

[86] PE, p.70.

[87] PE, p.70.

[88] PE, p.70.

as a gift, which makes an "accretion" of being possible. This movement toward the fulness of being is not an objective given; nothing has happened which prevents me from melting away in the crowd or from acting in some other purely arbitrary fashion. But when this event in front of me provides the opportunity to give something of myself as a person through what I have as an onlooker, any movement other than responsiveness becomes denial. I bear witness as a person in a situation. I am "one who remembers."[89] Such testimony is grounded in "fidelity to a light . . . received".[90] Marcel claims that life is such an event to which I am called to testify.

The aspect of an "open having" or "creative belonging" should be slightly clearer on the basis of these two illustrations. It is not as if this fulness of being can be demonstrated by such illustrations; it is rather that such allusions may awaken recognition and identification in the sensitive person. This is all that can be hoped for in this matter. (How utterly unacademic this sounds!) But a nonobjective having (what Marcel has somewhere called a "fundamental having,") such as this is subject to no other kind of discussion. Here "having" has been more than exorcised or lived with; it has been transformed into the having which I am. Here I "belong to what I am."[91]

A commentator has called this type of existential living "the ethics of participation". It depends on "availability" to "creative stimulus". It gives us the

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[89] PE, p.72.

[90] PE, pp.72-73.

[91] CF, p.97.

freedom to give meaning to a vocation or situation. This meaning is not "objectively inherent in these experiences," but known by involvement. "It is through a creative interpretation that we are able to give life the countenance of destiny."[92]

We are now in a position to see how this opening towards being allows us to form a foundation for ethics. The "given" in ethics is scarcely more objectifiable than in the more general areas of life under our investigation. Yet Marcel says that there is "a criteriology which is essential to ethics."[93] What criterion is applicable in such a situation?

We should note that Marcel never asks this formal kind of question, nor to my knowledge has he ever stated a formal answer in so many words. But there is a statement which I think suggests an answer. It takes the form of a question at the close of one of Marcel's best essays:

> What is the sign by which we can discover whether the personality is indeed surpassing and transcending itself or whether, on the contrary, it is falling back in some degree and sinking below its true level?[94]

What seems to me significant is that here a certain criterion emerges: Does this act I am about to commit or this attitude I am about to assume move me in the direction of the transformation of having? This is not the formulation of a law or a rule. To whatever extent this criterion

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[92] This brilliant and precisely accurate assessment from Pamplume, op.cit., p.95. Underlining mine.

[93] MJ, p.267.

[94] HV, p.26.

falls into that category it stiffles the possibilities it suggests. For Marcel ethics *per se* has a "criteriology" precisely because it seeks its own autonomy. But "incarnational ethics," the ethics of "being and having," is an affirmative way of living rather than a strict adherence to a set of rules. Such a position leads us to examine the authority of a morality of rules.

CHAPTER X

INADEQUACY OF RULES

A. Introductory Remarks

Marcel's philosophy, in part, is designed to refute the thesis that laws (rules) are an adequate basis for moral judgement. We might be suspicious of the thesis from the outset when we note that it poses a perennial problem of moral philosophy. But, of course, we recognise that its failure to gain secure establishment may be attributed to lack of adequate defense, to the rebellious or merely dilettante masses or to any number of less obvious reasons. Must we not carry the matter further, however, exactly because it is an unsettled problem?

It is significant to find the two terms "rules" and "judgement" included in the structure of the thesis. It is here that we immediately conceive an incompatibility, though not necessarily a complete contradiction. The use of a word such as "decision" in place of "judgement" would not help us appreciably, since it too would be modified by the term "moral"--that word which refers almost by definition to a stratum of life where the exactitude implied by rules is illusive and probably impossible.

It is a matter of fact that the term "rule" is sometimes employed in markedly different ways. This ambiguity in usage hides a more profound contradiction. This confusion appears especially in religious circles. Some use the term "rule" to indicate a norm which a "majority of Christians" accept but which, if adhered to, by no means fulfills the notion of morality. These would say on sex that one can be chaste "as the driven snow" by rule standards and yet promiscuous in the light of true ethical insight. Others, on the other hand, use the term "rule" to the effect that maintenance of it is a "high and rewarding standard" to which God responds with "grace and strength" to all who seek to fulfill it. The first position sees rules as established norms which are part of the structure of moral living; the second views them as incontrovertible laws to be adhered to under all conditions.[1]

The difference described seems to be between those who regard rules only and those who also take motives into consideration. The divergence here makes it easy to see why the term "love" is "bandied" about so much in modern treatments of morals. For here is a criterion which seems to be deeply related to the motive life as well as to external standards. This is, at least, one of the reasons why some thinkers are able to make a case for "love as the only rule". The insight is valuable but cannot withstand all the tests: Does love stand by itself? May it in the final analysis be called a rule without causing confusion of language? Does it have sufficient content and

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[1] C.f. British Council of Churches Working Party, Sex and Morality, (London:SCM Press, 1966), pp.22-31.

versatility to enable it to confront all possible situations? Is it not sometimes difficult to know what is the loving thing to do in a situation? Does this notion by itself offer a solution to the daemonic element which rises from time to time in human affairs? Certainly, it is the "greatest thing in the world" (as Henry Drummond said after the apostle Paul) but we shall need to see if it is in itself an adequate alternative to morality of rules.[2]

Why is it that rules apply so well in technology and not in moral philosophy? Both deal with men. Both seek to establish criteria in their respective fields. Both seek to give a remedy for human problems. The difference is that the science of technology observes man as an object to be studied, while in morals we may deal with man as a subject. Though there may be considerable overlapping, when medical scientists describe sexual deviation as "the will of the gods" and ethicists call it "over-active hormones," each have transgressed their proper boundaries.

Rules are adequate only in the confines of exact science. Even there, in the light of the post-Newtonian era of physics, their absolute applicability may now be questioned. Philosophers have confirmed this position. Aristotle said: "Morality is not an exact science." H.D. Lewis in his Philosophy of Religion stated: "Nothing is absolute in ethics in the sense of holding irrespective of the facts of the situation in which we find ourselves."[3]

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[2]This position is known today as "situational" or "contextual" ethics.

[3]Lewis, op.cit., p.259.

Marcel puts it:

> What is interesting from the philosophical point of view is that in this technical domain alone the word progress has kept the fulness of its meaning . . . The reason is that the criteria applicable to ethics, politics or indeed aesthetics cannot have the same precision as they have in the field of technics . . .[4]

B. Teleological Suspension or Conflicting Rules?

Those who wish to uphold the thesis that laws (rules) are an adequate basis for moral judgement will have to admit, at least, that it is difficult to formulate rules that apply equally well in every case. It may be that they must admit more than that: They must admit that there are limiting cases where rules seem to directly clash. They must say "Thou shalt not kill, except . . ." which is either to formulate a higher rule that will eventually come into conflict with another position and cause a formulation that in the end cannot be described as a rule at all, or they will need to develop a casuistry that rivals the Pharisees in its legalistic entanglements. (It could be argued that the way of the Pharisees is open to us today, except that a casuistry of that kind needs all the facts at its disposal. One of our problems is that the facts are multiplying so fast that we cannot keep pace with them, on the one hand. Also, there are some "elements" which impinge on the moral sphere which seem beyond our scope of knowledge.) Even those who accept certain rules, such as the Old Testament Decalogue, without qualification and in absolutely literal fashion, cannot escape the dilemma, as limit situations in our modern world have shown.

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[4]DW, p.8. Underlining mine.

It is my own conviction that Søren Kierkegaard established one thing, at least, in his remarkable tour de force, Fear and Trembling: There is such a thing as a teleological suspension of the ethical. Abraham was either a murderer or a knight of faith. It is true that the selection of the Abraham-Isaac story to establish such a thesis may have several drawbacks but there are plenty of modern examples to supplant that incident: Sonya in Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment, the Jewish doctor in the Nazi prison camp performing mercy motivated abortion operations on imprisoned expectant mothers, Dietrich Bonhoeffer "lying like a trooper" to "save the skins" of his friends, etc. It may be urged that all these have "extenuating circumstances". That must freely be admitted. And the reply is that it is precisely these circumstances which extend the rule beyond the range of its applicability. But do not these "limiting cases" uphold rather than nullify the rule? It would be interesting to analyse why this could be suggested in morals and not in science. The very suggestion points to the inexactitude prevalent in this realm. The suggestion too implies, in part, the point of this refutation; it implies that the rule has only limited adequacy.

Marcel provides us with a further example; Suppose a totalitarian regime might force a man to become a member of the security police and do acts "absolutely repugnant" to him upon the threat that his family would otherwise be injured. Both to refuse to do the acts or to do them places the man over against the rule. Marcel comments: "It is obvious that there is nothing in such an extremely particular

case out of which any general rule can be framed."[5] It is not melodramatic to regard evil in such situations as falling in on us from all sides, almost suffocating us with its relentless pressure. When we reflect on it seriously, the interwoveness of modern life causes us to wonder if this is ever escapable. Marcel comments:

> In our world as it is to-day there can be hardly any set of circumstances in which we may not be forced to ask ourselves whether, through our free choice, through our particular decisions, we are not going to make ourselves guilty of just such a complicity.[6]

This leads us to ask if we are talking only of "extremely particular" cases alone. Does this singularity extend through the whole of moral decision-making? Marcel asserts that there is an "element of the unique and the incommensurable which is the portion of every concrete being, confronted with a concrete situation."[7] This appears to me to indicate that no two persons or situations are exactly equatable. This leads to the conclusion that no single rule can apply equally well with two different people or two separate situations. (Yet one must be prepared to qualify this for the sake of practical processes.)

The contemporary Roman Catholic writer, Karl Rahner, gives a much more comforting appraisal. He announces that there is an "objective moral law" which, if interpreted by the "ordinary" or "extraordinary magisterium" of the Church, provides a safe guide to individual moral behaviour, since the Church is "preserved from error" by the Holy Spirit and

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[5] MAH, p.18.
[6] MAH, p.18.
[7] MAH, p.18. Underlining mine.

thus expresses what is "really the will of God". From this static position he logically claims that "every" abortion, divorce, etc., is morally wrong.[8]

From the evidence already adduced and from what we shall go on to say, Rahner's position is simply unacceptable. Thus, we must agree with Rahner when he says:

> A situation-ethic carried to its logical conclusion would become an ethical and metaphysical nominalism in which the universal could never actually bear upon the concrete with binding force.[9]

That is an accurate assessment, given Rahner's traditional terms of reference in which the universal is set over against the concrete and in which the only alternative to objective authority is subjective solipcism. We shall note later that it is Marcel who attempts to render these metaphysical and ethical polarities null and void by a perceptive view of man's life in the world.

We should ask before closing this part of the discussion, whether those difficult "limiting cases" should be construed as possibilities for "ethical suspension," as Kierkegaard would say, or simply as cases of "conflicting rules," as situational thinkers would likely term it? This is not simply an academic question since it illuminates how we construe the effect of rules in moral decision. It would seem that to view the case simply as one where rules conflict is an inadequate analysis for the following reasons: (1)It fails to take account of the possibility of intuitive action for the relatively free agent. (2)It

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[8]C.f. Karl Rahner, Nature, Grace and Other Essays, trans. Dinah Wharton (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), pp.96-99.

[9]Ibid., p.100.

implies that a new rule needs to be formulated to resolve the conflict--a position that will only lead to an infinite regress in rule-making, which will either remain arbitrarily in the sphere of rules or will eventually force the formulation of a statement something like a Kantian "categorical imperative" which is unable to give specific guidance. The other alternative would be a certain kind of casuistry of which we have already spoken. (3) It fails to take account of the possibility of the unusual situation, what Jaspers calls "boundary situation," in life. It remains to be seen just how many of the so-called "usual situations" are casually so judged by a faulty "common-sense" philosophy of life.

C. Means and Ends Controversy

There seems to be impressive support for the following statement: "In moral judgment the way a decision is made is as important as the content of the actual decision." It is doubtful that this is a rule, though admittedly it seems to be posed as such. It simply recognises that life is in some sense a continuum. It recognises that the end in view is but a means in a new situation and that the means in this situation could well be called ends if viewed from a different perspective of concern.

Again, Kierkegaard has contributed much to this understanding. Unless one has taken seriously the issue of personal responsibility in this particular moral dilemma, one cannot claim to even be on the level of moral decision; one remains at a sub-moral level. Moreover, one can only ascend to a supra-moral level, the area of faith for Kierkegaard, if he has in "fear and trembling," which is the means, gone through the ethical sphere.

Marcel does not, to my knowledge, discuss this problem in just this fashion. He would rather describe the intermingling of means and ends as "being-in-a-situation". There are points, however, where we are able to detect a concern for this very problem.

In one case, Marcel refers to a "certain well-known cleric" who in the early post-World War II years, exalted the Soviet society as the fulfillment of history. When the cleric was reminded of the prisons and labour camps which were a feature of the Soviet scene, he replied that these factors were only irrelevant minutiae in comparison to the whole. Marcel retorts that by the twin errors of "canonization of both history and numbers" the clergyman has fallen prey to an idol. Marcel refuses to regard as good a utopia gained at the expense of imposed human suffering.[10] This recalls the position of Dostoyevsky in refusing to allow that it is ethical to save the whole world if one has to damn one life to accomplish it.[11] Yet Marcel would hesitate to make even that a rule.

Marcel avers his repugnance to Sartre's statement to journalists upon disembarking from an aeroplane in Geneva, Switzerland in 1946: "Gentlemen, God is dead." Was not Nietzsche's pronouncement exactly the same? Marcel thinks not:

> In Nietzsche this terrible affirmation is a private thought uttered in fear and trembling by a thinker who feels himself condemned to sacrilege; put forth

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[10] DW, p.57.

[11] This was expressed in the novel, The Brothers Karamazov.

> by Sartre at the airport it becomes a headline for the dailies and is by that very fact devoid of its substance.[12]

Marcel has here hit upon a key concept in the search for a basis of moral judgement. Marcel notes that the vital question is in the "realm of ethics".[13] Is it ethical to make an announcement in the presence of others which is likely to change the course of their conduct? Only, says Marcel, if the speaker has "accepted what he thought was the worst for himself."[14] Marcel comments: "This amounts to saying that what justifies not the judgement but the articulation of that judgement--that is, its place in existence--is a certain value which is itself existential."[15] This is another way of saying that means are as important as ends. Marcel is not saying that the "what" of a statement is of no consequence, but that the "why, when, and where" of the statement matter also.

It is significant that this emphasis on the existential situation appears in modern writers of a vastly different type from Marcel. For example, the same kind of emphasis may be seen in the influential Americal philosopher, John Dewey. Charles L. Stevenson, a critical disciple of Dewey, regards the emphasis placed by Dewey on means as well as ends, as "the most original and

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[12] EBHD, p.64.

[13] EBHD, p.63.

[14] EBHD, p.63.

[15] EBHD, p.63. The essence of Marcel's unfinished drama, Un Juste, described in EBHD, pp.54-60, is centred around this position. This we shall notice later.

important part of Dewey's ethics."[16] It does not sound at all foreign to Marcel's attitude when Stevenson says with approval: "For a Deweyan conception of ethics, in short, an appeal to the consequences must be introduced at the very beginning of ethics."[17]

Another contemporary ethicist of some consequence, Paul Ramsey, has been quoted recently as saying, "How we do what we do is as important as our goals."[18] This writer, on the right-wing fringe of the situationist movement, is some way removed from Marcel but provides instructive support for our point that there appears to be widely diversified contemporary support for an ethics that takes account of "means" equally as much as "ends".

D. Tension Between Fact and Value

The influential school of logical positivists has been skeptical of any attempt to formulate prescriptive morals. The early members of this philosophical movement tended to disallow any language usage which had no empirically verifiable referent. Ethicists and theologians were often considered to be talking "non-sense" language--a language comparable to the inane utterings of the mentally ill. With such a philosophical position, Marcel

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[16] Charles L. Stevenson, Ethics and Language (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p.103.

[17] Ibid., p.109. In the context it is evident that "consequences" refers to essentially the same features that we have called "means". Means, once enacted, become consequences along with the "ends" involved.

[18] "Situation Ethics," Time (January 21, 1966), p.53. It is likely that this was said in a lecture in Oslo, Norway, early in 1957. The lecture was repeated on 11th March, 1959, at University College, Dublin, before the Pax Romana Society. It has been published as "What One Can Expect of Philosophy," Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review, Vol.XLVII (1959), pp.151-162.

would have to be considered largely irrelevant.[19]

Recent years, however, have seen a loosening of the positivists' rigid position. Later essays by A.J. Ayer, for example, show increased interest in the perennial questions of philosophy.[20] Many linguistic analysts now talk of the possibility of speaking prescriptively about morals. R.M. Hare, for example, has proposed that there are different "language games" which one can "speak-play".[21] Thus, the descendents of the positivists have tended to move back into a more traditional stream of philosophical thought.

In very recent years there has even been an attempt to secure some rapprochement with the two schools of philosophy which have most heavily influenced twentieth-century thought--analytical and existential philosophy. Marcel himself has lamented the separation between British and Scandinavian analysts and the more existentially oriented philosophies of Germany, France, Spain, Italy, etc.[22]

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[19] The reference here is to "the Viennese circle" composed of thinkers such as Moritz Schlick, Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap and Herbert Feigl.

[20] The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, published in 1940, appears to be the first example of this broadened interest. Later publications follow the same trend.

[21] C.f. Languages of Morals (London: Clarendon Press, 1952). Note others like I.T. Ramsey, I.M. Crombie and Basil Mitchell, who have entered these ranks. John Wisdom was one of the earlier scholars. Wittgenstein, himself, seems to have opened up the possibility in his later writings.

[22] This source has escaped my attention. It is likely that this was said in a lecture in Oslo, Norway, early in 1957. The lecture was repeated on 11th March, 1959, at University College, Dublin, before the Pax Romana Society. It has been published as "What One Can Expect of Philosophy," Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review, Vol.XLVII (1959), pp.151-162.

Possibly the January, 1967, encounter of A. J. Ayer and Marcel on the campus of Notre Dame University, South Bend, Indiana, United States of America, is evidence of increasing interest in contact between these two diverse philosophical schools. It must be admitted that Marcel's language would itself often be an obstacle to the analysts. This barrier is reduced, however, by the keen interest Marcel takes in analysing the words he uses and by his obvious concern to remain close to "the concrete".

Some have attempted to establish a link between the analysts and the right wing existentialists by approaching each side from an alleged mediating position.[23] Zuurdeeg claims that "man establishes his existence by speaking "morally".[24] It is "convictional" language, says Zuurdeeg, which offers the place of meeting between the two philosophical strains.[25] This is not the only attempt at rapprochement, but it is one of considerable interest since he singles out Marcel for much attention as an existentialist representative.[26]

We have established that Marcel has little time for the "bare fact" materialists. His opposition to Marxism on this and other counts is public knowledge. By the same token, Marcel has, from before the time of the Journal, disengaged himself from the speculations of many

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[23] Zuurdeeg, op.cit., pp.115ff and passim.

[24] Ibid., p.265; supra, note 48 in chapter on "Philosophical Language".

[25] Ibid., pp.262ff.

[26] Zuurdeeg apparently does not realise that Marcel regards conviction as something "closed," while only faith is "open". For Zuurdeeg, conviction is "open"; cf. Marcel's distinction between faith and conviction; GF, pp.133-134.

Hegelian-like idealists. It is this dual negation that makes it possible for Marcel to see fact and value in a rather unitary way. Or as he might say, it is "the concrete" which is the sphere where "the beyond" asserts itself. A summary passage is appropriate to the point:

> I am therefore able to say that from the beginning my researches were explicitly directed towards what might be called the concrete examination of the individual and of the transcendent, as opposed to all idealism based on the impersonal or the immanent.[27]

For Marcel fact and value tend to coalesce. Values need to be "embodied". Marcel says: "The property of a value . . . is to assume a certain function in relation to life and, as it were, to mark it with its seal."[28] This is to assert that there are some valuable facts or factual values which cannot be interpreted by either the materialists or the idealists, since they await discovery in a sphere which each in their own way denies.

In one essay Marcel takes up the "notion of spiritual heritage".[29] In essence he says: Certainly a spiritual heritage" is no objective thing to be passed on as a "perpetual possession". It has reality only as long as it is accompanied by "gratitude". It is more than a feeling, a habit, or a physical reaction--though it often includes all of these. Our real forebears have offered us a gift which we need to accept with gratitude.

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[27] HV, p.137. Underlining mine; CF, p.148, says about the same in terms of "individual being" and "being as such".

[28] HV, p.155. Later we shall call this "incarnate value".

[29] DW, pp.21ff .

There is a kind of "mediation" here. But, and this is crucial, the mediation is itself mediated by a spirit which gives it a dignity and value.

To the extent that history "degenerates into piling up of information and becomes inscription instead of memory" the notion of a "spiritual heritage" will disappear. It will disappear too when according to the analyses of Nietzsche and Sartre, "freedom pre-exists values," since this is to ignore the "incarnate" reality of what we may freely call a "gift". We are obliged to recognise the tension which exists between the individual and the universal here. This tension is irreducible. It does, however, find a place of meaning in a subject who, refusing to be "immersed in" or "cut off from" history, witnesses to this heritage. Marcel says:"The heritage is a reiterated call rather than a possession which is handed on."[30] In the midst of many discordant calls that subject may freely affirm the formula: "Become that which thou art."[31] It is precisely here that the subject-object distinction is no longer useful. Marcel says: "To understand this we need only recall that it is only by an abstraction that the gift can be separated from the way in which it is accepted, acknowledged, and made into an object of gratitude."[32]

I think a less "mystical" example of what Marcel is pointing out in this perceptive reflection on "spiritual heritage" is to be found in the modern activity of urban

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[30] DW, p.44. Underlining mine; c.f. CF, p.52 for similar note on Marcel's understanding of history as not "immatable".

[31] DW, p.33.

[32] DW, p.36.

renewal. Urban authorities are aware of the need for renewal. Residence places in the inner and older part of the city begin to decay from age. Simultaneously the more creative elements in that section of the city move to more "wholesome" locations at the edge of the city. People with no special appreciation for the historical significance of this deteriorating section move in to fill up the vacuum. A vicious circle is created where crumbling surroundings adversely affect the morale of the people and they in turn take out their resentment on their surroundings, including their fellow inhabitants, by engaging in sloughful practices, vandalism and crime.

The problems of achieving urban renewal are equally well known. Often the will to act and/or the resources to act are simply not present. Assuming they are present, the ancient tenements may be torn down and "high-rise" flats rise out of their wake. But the problems seem to multiply. If rents for new premises are increased the inhabitants move to another section of the city and lend their debilitating influence to that section which is probably already in decline. If they stay, their dissatisfaction is often intensified because the habitual movement of the life of this section, however unprofitable, has been disrupted by an outside influence, forcing them into a mould with which they are not sufficiently creative to cope. The "high-rise" flats present innumerable problems in human communication. For example, children may much easier escape the tending eye of the parent and thus fall under untoward influences. Usually the money available for urban renewal provides only the barest outline of amenities. Thus, the result of this kind of renewal is often a sharp

rise in the rate of the problems urban renewal is designed to combat.

A successful variation on renewal has been attempted in a number of modern cities. Instead of razing the existing structures, a paint-up, fix-up, clean-up campaign has been initiated. Public monies are provided but the people do most of the work. Old structures about to fall down are reinforced, painted bright colours, surrounded by flower gardens and grass. The result is a lowering in the problems common to slum areas.[33]

What is the difference? It is exactly the difference between rooting-up and renewing. It is precisely the difference between destroying and maintaining what may well be called "community". The second method of renewal is preferable because of the following reasons: (1)There is a maintenance of a physical link with the past, which, however dilapidated, offers a sense of longevity to the area. (2)The people realise that there is someone concerned

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[33]This manner of urban renewal is common knowledge to sociologists and city planners. For example, T. Brennan in Reshaping A City (Glasgow: The House of Grant, 1959), p.200 says concerning the well-known Govan area of Glasgow: "The idea should be one of repairing, reviving, and thereby renewing Govan rather than waiting until it has deteriorated sufficiently to be replaced altogether." At this writing, it has come to my attention that the City Council of Glasgow is again talking in these terms after a decade of significant progress in the building of new areas. It may be that there is renewed recognition that a "sense of community" is as important as a new building, i.e., the Gorbals area may have a quality that it will take East Kilbride years to achieve.

about their problems as human beings and not as numbers on a chart. (3)The people themselves are involved in the operation of renewal; a fact which draws them together in the pursuance of a common cause. (4)Whatever remnants of community that existed are drawn together and reinforced by strengthened morale and pride of accomplishment.

How does this example of urban renewal enlarge on Marcel's "notion of spiritual heritage"? In two ways: First, as a parallel instance with less intangible overtones. Second, as an example which itself is not far removed from the "notion of spiritual heritage".

There is no doubt that one of the problems making urban renewal a necessity is the objective loss of physical beauty and utility. However, it may well be asserted, with the support of the behavioral sciences, that what was really missing was the "sense of community". This element is something very difficult, possibly impossible, to produce from outside; it must be created out of the existing fabric of society. Like the "notion of spiritual heritage," the idea of "community" cannot be objectified in any final sense, though it may be called a "repeated communion," if it be understood that in each repitition we are not creating ex nihilo but rather incarnating the positive possibilities made available in this previous encounter. Here we see how the idea of community merges with Marcel's "notion of spiritual heritage" at a point where it is not merely a physical object preserved or simply a personal subject rehabilitated, but rather an inherent possibility embodied.[34]

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[34]MAH, p.124.

It must now be shown how both these examples refer to the thesis we are attempting to refute. In both cases we are referring to a fact-value that loses its character if either part of the equation is disregarded. It seems to this writer that rules encroach on the admittedly more illusive area of value causing them to lose their well-defined nature and certain applicability. It might be argued that rules themselves are examples of the encroachment of facts on values and vice versa. That argument seems true to me and it appears to give further evidence that rules are an artificial attempt to freeze this mutual movement in mid-stream, thus polluting the freedom of moral decision. Morals, like "community" and the "notion of spiritual heritage," is a category in-between and rising above the alleged subject-object dichotomy. This ought not to be confused with the Hegelian notion of synthesis. It is rather like the "open having" which we described in the previous chapter.

Morals cannot be a sort of "world consciousness" laid down in a set of rules. Marcel calls such a materialistic image a "mirage".[35] Mass media has been responsible for such a unification which is not a unity, because it has no individuation. Such a situation represents the loss of moral sensibility, not its gain. It must be emphasized again, however, that the opposite pole of moral anarchy is equally illusory.

Marcel returns in such instances to examples coming out of artistic endeavor. The artist, for example, who never finds himself because he is always dabbling in novelty is no improvement over the one who finds himself,

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[35] Source uncertain.

achieves recognition, and then refuses to move on past that point because it would threaten his commercial success. Neither are real artists. Both examples are analogous to the moral sphere and equally disasterous. There is an aesthetic appeal in Vermeer's "View of Delft" or in Beethoven's "Thirteenth Quartet". For Marcel they are even "supra-personal" appeals with spiritual value.[36] Marcel would view right action, in a comparable way, as a response to a real call or an illumination which is mediated only to those perceptive enough--concerned enough--to hear or see in the concrete situation.

E. Relation of Religion to Morals

It would seem that morals tend to merge with religion just as fact does with value. No moral question may be rightly considered apart from the relevant religious questions. This is not to say that the two categories are identical or even that all morality is directly based on religious belief and practice. The claim is no more than the conviction that moral interest implies a religious concern and that moral goodness implies a supra-moral relation.

We would not disagree, at this juncture, with the H.D. Lewis remark that "no strict argument from moral objectivity to religion or any similar explicit dependence of ethics, as such, on religion" can be established.[37] We would want to argue, however, that there is some relation--and a significant one--between the two categories.

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[36] MAH, p.129.

[37] Op.cit., p.197.

Marcel is not found to discuss this matter frequently. Yet there are crucial allusions which may be singled out for study. There is the matter of what we might call the "spiritual climate". Marcel believes that the philosopher, for example, must have a constant concern for the atmosphere that prevails in the society of which he is a part. He remarks concerning Kant's relation to society: "Nobody can deny that the vital atmosphere of Kantianism was one of Christianity and even of Christian pietism."[38] Marcel goes on to state that even as that Christian atmosphere has died, so Kantian ethics must be regarded as passe' since they could only work in a society that really was not secularised. Marcel elaborates:

> Most of the materialists of that century [19th] were still men who went on behaving as if they held the religious beliefs which they declared that they had lost.[39]

Men today are more consistent in this respect at least.

Marcel does seem to attack this issue head-on at one point. I quote:

> The true God is a living God--not merely the logical God required by some perfectionist moralities. To identify divine perfection with the good is an ambiguous step, because either we are only being tautologous or else we are claiming to base love on a previous (ethical) content and are vitiating profoundly what is essential in the act of love.[40]

This note, early in the Metaphysical Journal, shows Marcel refusing to identify the good with God. God is beyond

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[38] MAH, p.175.

[39] MAH, p.176. The historian, Herbert Butterfield, in the 1966-67 Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow, referred to such people as "lapsed Christians".

[40] MJ, p.65.

good and evil, in the sense that there is no common measure between a statement about God and an ethical judgement. The laws of men, even if claimed to be revealed fiats of God, fail to express the quality of being, resident in God or necessary for ethical life. This is only the negative side. I quote Seymour Cain in what seems to me an accurate assessment of Marcel's position on this head:

> All our values, norms, and obligations acquire their transcendent character from being rooted in a real 'beyond', and not from an abstract canon or a mental postulate. Value is always existentially incarnated and situated, but it points ultimately to transcendence, to the 'beyond', to the absolute Thou.[41]

In other words, all true rules gain their validity by pointing beyond themselves. A rule has validity in as much as it claims for itself no self-sufficiency.

It is from this stance that Marcel criticises the basis of moral judgement in Sartre. Sartre has been known to praise the heroes of the French Resistance. But on what basis? "God is dead," and man is "nothing" for Sartre. The right cannot be recognised or discovered; it can only be the "initial choice, made by each human being".[42] This position is similar to that held by those Marcel calls "sociological moralists,"[43] who operate on the "infra-personal" level. It is from this standpoint too that Marcel sees Camus' exaltation of absurdity "for which total absence of value becomes the supreme value".[44]

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[41] Op.cit., p.85. Marcel says exactly this in CF, p.167.

[42] PE, p.63. A detailed comparison of Marcel and Sartre appears later.

[43] HV, p.74.

[44] HV, p.209.

It is significant that Marcel does not often try to show the logical inconsistency of such arbitrary positions. In Being and Having he does mention that the one advantage of the nihilist assertion is that it serves as a "springboard" for the consciousness which denies such absurdity.[45] He indicates in another place, rather pragmatically, the ruin that such a philosophy of self-destruction eventually brings.[46] But basically, for Marcel, our objection to this moral chaos must be as a response to that in life which is vulnerable and by the same token sacred.[47] This is to say that a person must recognise that grace has been given him and as a result he must act responsibly.[48] This means nothing other than "conversion," though not necessarily for Marcel in the Christian sense.[49] The "desacralisation" common to modern life, and prevalent in moral thought, is not so much bad reasoning as it is bad faith.

F. Calculation Versus Spontaneity

It may be apparent by now that Marcel has insufficient faith in the human reason to develop an ethic based on calculation. It should also be evident that he is too much of a believer in the possibility of moral goodness to give much of a place to pure spontaneity. But it is easier to negate than to propose an alternative. The key centres around "incarnate existence".

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[45] BH, p.92.

[46] PE, p.62. The importance of the end as well as the means is included in this judgement.

[47] EBHD, p.128.

[48] HV, pp.159-160.

[49] EBHD, p.167. That this "conversion" is subject to some formula, Marcel explicitly denies. "This is not necessarily a call for return to religion in its standard and confessional forms." p.167

We should note that there are twin dangers to be avoided here. The "calculationists" leave us with the uncomfortable feeling that persons are being "thingified". (An example is the "situational" Joseph Fletcher, who might well be compared with Marcel.) It is sometimes apparent too that subjective judgements are being given a superficial gloss or rationality and being presented to us as finished products. These are the makers of rules par excellence.

The "spontanists," on the other side, often refuse to pose the moral question at all.[50] This refusal may be resolved into an untenable position: This refusal is based on an inarticulate rule which implies a legalism and commitment of its own. An example is a commitment to the "rule of sincerity" which is the guiding principle in Andre' Gide's proposals.

Marcel's concept of "creative fidelity" is certainly an attempt to pick a way between these dangers, not fearing to take any of their respective assets with him. Thus, all we need say at this point is that these two categories need not even be the controlling terms of reference in the ethics of faithfulness and discovery, of creative being.

G. On Bearing Responsibility

Part of the questions raised in the previous issue may be resolved in a description of personal involvement in the moral situation.

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[50] Marcel calls these "instantaneists" in CF, pp. 160, 162, 168.

The obvious assumptions here are that there is a realm of freedom where moral decision takes place and that it remains sub-moral unless the risk this freedom implies is taken seriously. Obviously, if the right and good are objectively presented then there is no difficulty, no need of freedom, no risk involved. It is the area of inexact determinacy, however, where the problem lies. Here the responsibility for decision lies with the agent involved.

It is exactly the assumption of this risk which is then a fundamental basis of moral decision. To shoulder this load is to admit that rules are <u>in themselves</u> an inadequate basis for moral judgement. Marcel puts it that "my sort of moral bookkeeping is of its very nature concerned with factors that evade any attempt to define their essence or even to demonstrate their existence."[51] Thus, any attempt to give my life a score is impossible, though we seem condemned to do this.

For Marcel, it is important to recognise that this inner freedom is not something I automatically bring to a situation or which is necessarily constituative of the situation. In Marcel's drama, <u>Le Monde Casse'</u>, Christine is a person struggling for self-understanding. When she discovers her "real soul" she is able to confess her guilt and establish healthier relationships.[52] But it is by means of a "secondary reflection," a "recuperative power" not her own, mediated to her in the spiritual offer of another which, when freely accepted as a gift, brings her a measure of release.[53] Here "intersubjectivity" becomes a

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[51] MBI, p.168.

[52] MBI, pp.168-169.

[53] MBI, pp.168-169.

basis for ethical living. Here the inadequate nature of rules in themselves is again exposed. The concern for rules and the impossibility of their exact formulation is summed up in the following: "My life infinitely transcends my possible conscious grasp of my life at any given moment."[54]

H. Problem of Abstraction

Earlier we observed in a general fashion how abstract thought should be viewed. But what is the problem in the particular area of moral thought?

There is no question that abstraction is necessary for thought. It is the process that clears the ground by leaving aside certain elements. It thus helps us to attack a problem by lifting it out for analysis. But abstraction may lead us astray. When it becomes a "spirit" unconscious of the "leaving out" which it entails, it becomes a danger. "The spirit of abstraction," said Marcel, "is not separable from this contempt for concrete conditions of abstract thinking."[55]

It was Scheler and Nietzsche who recognised the passion of resentment resident in the spirit of abstraction. The operation is reductive; it allows men to say, "'<u>This is</u> only <u>that</u> . . . <u>This</u> is nothing other than <u>that</u>'," an abstraction certain to lead to false conclusions. Thus,

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[54] Supra, note 18 in chapter on "Indefinable Self".

[55] MAH, p.116. This-sub-section is based on the essay, "The Spirit of Abstraction, as a Factor Making for War"; <u>supra</u>, notes 21 to 28 in chapter on "Secondary Reflection" where we dealt with this matter on a broader philosophical basis.

[56] MAH, p.116.

we become aware that abstraction may not be as essentially rational as is sometimes believed. When it becomes self-important there is "a transposition of the attitudes of imperialism to the mental plane."[57]

Marcel gives three examples where abstraction has led to dangerous consequences. It has, for one, made it possible to formulate philosophical systems simply by disregarding some inherent problems.[58] It has led to war: I must abstract in order to see the enemy as all bad, all communist, all beast, etc. Marcel says:

> The element of resentment in human nature is profoundly linked to a tendency to conceptual dissociation--in this, lying at the opposite pole to the element of admiration.[59]

It led, also, to the unfortunate linkage of "equality" and "fraternity" in the French Revolution and since. One is based on "self-getting" and the other on "self-giving". Only the spirit of abstraction can identify the two.

This leads us to ask just what are the motives for the formulation of rules. We should fall into the trap we set for ourselves if we said it is nothing other than a refusal to acknowledge a fundamental risk at the heart of moral judgement. We are led, however, to say that this is sometimes the case. To the extent that a rule is an abstraction from the concrete reality of the situation, to the extent it prevents free moral judgement. It must be understood that rules do not necessarily embody a universal;

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[57] MAH, p.116.

[58] Cf. his "Essay in Autobiography" where he says this is what he has refused to do, PE, p.88.

[59] MAH, p.117.

rather they are often an attempt to come to a universal judgement before the exigences of the situation are fully faced. In this sense, rules are far removed from the much desired universal. The motive often appears then to be an ill-concealed desire to escape under the canopy of mass consciousness, rather than to take the full consequences of the judgement made. Such a motive provides an ill-grounded basis for moral judgement.

Marcel insists that "secondary reflection" makes possible an intimacy with concrete reality. This concrete is not given first of all. As previously noted, given first are "abstractions . . . like so many little still unseparated clots of matter."[60] This is where secondary reflection comes in: "It is only by going through and beyond the process of scientific abstraction that the concrete can be regrasped and reconquered."[61] Such incarnate thought is the remedy for the spirit which would formulate general rules to cover situations which defy the adequacy of such terms of reference.

I. Judging Moral Value

It is not strictly possible in every situation to judge the rightness or wrongness of another's moral action. This Marcel admits, though his whole philosophy represents a bulwark against a reactionary subjectivism towards which such a position might eventually lead.

If morality were a question of pure knowledge then rules would always apply. Then we would certainly be able

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[60] MAH, p.119. Supra, note 21 in chapter on "Secondary Reflection".

[61] MAH, p.119. Supra, note 4 in chapter on "Secondary Reflection".

to judge the good or evil of the act another commits. It is no easy matter to admit that the alleged guilt of the other may not be anything more than "non-conformity" and yet guard ourselves against "pure ethical monadism".[62] It is along such a razor's edge, however, that we seem destined to travel.

Marcel says in essence: All we can say is that certain norms seem to have value when acted upon. If the other person rejects such instruction we have no real recourse. We might reject his rejection, but on what basis. To say objectively that he is wrong is to be pharisaical and we "are a thousand leagues from genuine moral life."[63] To say that another is guilty, rather than merely non-conformist, is to judge him from our light which he may not have had opportunity to share. Marcel says: "I am thus bound to think of the guilty man in one respect as belonging to a world from which in another respect he is excluded."[64] Only what has previously been called "conversion" can unify the split in the man's nature, which is really of a "metaphysical character".[65] Surely "moral value," like "aesthetic value," is not binding upon a person unless it be recognised by him.[66]

The implication of the setting up of moral rules is that one man is able to judge another in some final

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[62] MJ, p.215.
[63] MJ, p.216.
[64] MJ, p.217.
[65] MJ, p.217.
[66] MJ, p.217.

sense concerning the correctness of his moral decisions. But Marcel regards the "Thou shalt not judge" of Christian morality "one of the most important metaphysical formulae on earth".[67] It is precisely our inability to "stand in another man's shoes" which makes rules of judgement an inconclusive criteria in our hands.

We are in mortal danger of moral anarchy when we say what has just gone before.[68] We must not be oblivious of the consequences of what we are saying. This fear may, in fact, have caused Marcel to play the part of a reactionary in an essay published in 1954. He refuses to be known as an "irrationist" and insists that he has never deserved such an onerous title. Then he mentions his fear of the "ever increasing aberration in the sphere of ethical and speculative thought and in that of aesthetics"--a fear which causes him to consider carefully his own position. He observes that values are related to "wisdom and common sense" which he admits having "spontaneously depreciated". Such existential "exaggerations," as are common in Søren Kierkegaard and his disciples, (e.g., discrediting wisdom and common sense, stressing the individual overmuch, presenting existence as primary over essence) are all to be avoided.

If this represents a slight change of position, says Marcel, it is in the face of a time when "humanity itself, and not only the individual, is dangerously tempted to commit suicide."[69] Only a philosophy of

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[67] WJ, p.64; c.f. CF, p.150. "It is not our part to judge what constitutes fidelity or treason in another."

[68] The following two paragraphs are taken from DW, pp.i-viii.

[69] DW, p.vii.

abstraction will discount such dangers. Consequently, in recent years, thinkers "imbued with the s nse of the universal" have influenced Marcel's thought.[70] Still, it is instructive to note that Marcel did not even urge a return to rules as such, for a proper moral foundation.

Whether Marcel, in the light of two world conflicts which have affected him tremendously, began to move to a position where he felt himself more easily able to judge others, is problematic. It is possible that since the delivery of the Gifford Lectures, as he has become more widely known and read, that he has over-emphasized "the role of the philosopher" to the detriment of his careful thought. Or has Marcel's thought lost some of its force? Marcel does admit in the opening remarks of the Harvard Lectures that his strength is "now, unfortunately, declining".[71] It is necessary to report, however, that while Marcel did not break new ground in these lectures at Harvard University, he did relate his dramatic work to his philosophical writings in a remarkable way. If anything, Marcel's later thought shows a marked improvement in clarity over earlier works that themselves had never been noted for their obtuseness. This clarity can hardly be called superficiality, since the William James Lectures elucidate what Marcel had said earlier in one form or another.

It seems that this emphasis on "wisdom," which, incidentally, is not followed up in the later writing, is to a large extent a reiteration of Marcel's continued

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[70] DW, p.viii. Thinkers such as Mex Picard, Gustave Thibon and T.S. Eliot. Supra, note 41 in chapter on "Influential Participation".

[71] EBHD, p.3.

interest in the "climate" which is the philosopher's context.[72] It is the inclusion of talk about "common sense" that appears out of place in Marcel's language. For Marcel in his usual thought-forms, "sense" is never "common" in any way, except possibly as available for anyone who takes the trouble. Possibly this peculiarity might be cleared up in the obscure hint that common sense is very much like wisdom--sort of its "deposit".[73]

We might conclude this rather discursive point by saying that the pressures of later years may well have caused Marcel to move to a more conservative position about the basis of moral judgement. The essays in the volume, The Decline of Wisdom, would lead us to think that. We must say, however, that the later writings do not show this new concern at all. Possibly the "wisdom" essays were prepared for a less technically trained audience and suffer from the problems of over-simplification. We must say that Marcel would still be extremely reluctant to think he could sit in moral judgement on the actions of another man, though the difficulty in separating himself from the "irrationists" in the popular mind may weigh on him very heavily. It would appear to this writer that the effort to invoke the notions of "wisdom" and "common sense" do not represent Marcel's best defense against individual anarchy in moral conduct. Other lines already suggested and subject to further discussion are the significant contributions.

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[72] Supra, note 58.

[73] DW, p.44.

Marcel on November 26th, 1919, speaks of the inadequacy of rules as a basis for ethical life: "The problem is serious because, unless I am mistaken, there can be no question of a formal totality of rules that are in the strict sense valid."[74] Forty-two years later Marcel said: "The reader must be cautioned against any possible misinterpretation of my thought . . . It is precisely the idea of a formula of any kind that I intended to challenge."[75]

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[74] MJ, p.215.

[75] EBHD, p.167. The quote is relevant, though in the context Marcel is not talking only of ethics. Sentiment of a similar nature may be found in MBI, p.139; also, CF, pp.47-48. It should be parenthetically noted that Marcel points to the several respects in which rules are inadequate. Some of these we have examined. Marcel does not say that rules ought to be discarded altogether. What place do rules have in society? Marcel may be willing to bring rules in the "back door" but this does not mean he is willing to give them the honoured chair by the fire. That is to say, Marcel may be willing to acknowledge the didactic advisability of rules in society.

This "back door admission" could only be based on a pervasive skepticism about the ability and/or willingness of men to act ethically as creatively free moral agents. This skepticism is founded upon the characteristic in man which has in Christian doctrine been called "inherited depravity" or "original sin". (This notion, of course, has come in for considerable condemnation by the educational psychologists and others.) It is of interest to note that Reinhold Niebuhr affirmed a form of this notion in his Gifford Lectures and in his latest writing on "community" he maintains the position though admitting it was a "pedagogical error" to use this terminology.) It is further founded on the observation that the further one becomes removed from the communion of intimate relationships, the more the need for formulation of rules occurs; a married couple need never invoke a particular rule to remain faithful to each other while two national entities need rigidly formulated rules clearly stated in order to continue "friendly" relations.

Marcel is no less critical of the sophistry of Gide, Sartre and their followers. He speaks of the "entirely false thesis that man chooses his own values".[76] In the same vein, in the William James Lectures, he attacks those for whom "value is tied up with the perpetual siege of novelty."[77] The point again, however, is that Marcel does not resort to the bulwark of rules in order to find a point of stability.

The admission that rules are necessary in order to teach men how to act implies that men are incapable of ethical action since that very approach deprives them of a personal style which law itself cannot give. I am willing to consider, however, that an indirect teaching method--the use of rules to produce the end of moral living--may in the long run create the desired moral effect. By desired effect I mean nothing more than a persons willingness to take upon himself responsibility for his moral decisions. We teach children rules with the intention that they will "grow up" to this maturity.

There is, however, a certain arrogance about supposing I know what rule will produce the desired effect or even supposing that I have the right to be a teacher. This right is highly questionable in the relations of peers, but the risk probably must be taken in all possible humility.

But it must be emphasized that we are here on an entirely other level of consideration than Marcel's notion of fidelity.

76 MJ, p.xi. This will be discussed in detail later.

77 EBHD, p.66. It should be understood that Marcel has tended to argue against a formal sort of ethics, even from his first writings. Thus, Marcel's traditional position has been to distinguish between fidelity and obedience. The challenge of radical existentialist thought, however, forced Marcel to make a further distinction, the distinction between a fidelity having an inner structure and a so-called fidelity which attained no cohesion even in retrospect. It is appropriate, then, that the discussion of Marcel's traditional distinction takes place here at the heart of the attempt to separate fidelity from formalism. The effort to separate fidelity from a spontaneous ethics is not ignored in this context but it will appear more readily in the comparison of Marcel and Sartre in later pages.

Faced with the dilemma of this dual negation, Marcel attempts to describe in phenomenological fashion the "concrete universal" to be found in what he refers to as "fidélité créatrice". It is to this subject that we now turn our attention.

"Fidelity can only be shown toward a person, never at all to a notion or an ideal."

Gabriel Marcel

CHAPTER XI

RECREATIVE FIDELITY

A. Introductory Remarks

Marcel mentions in the William James Lectures that "If I am not mistaken, the expression, 'creative fidelity,' appears for the first time in my essay entitled 'On the Ontological Mystery,' which is at the center of my philosophical work."[1] In actual fact this reference in the 1933 essay is preceded by a reference to "creative fidelity" in "A Metaphysical Diary," dated October 7th, 1932. There he says: "Consider creative fidelity, a fidelity only safeguarded by being creative. Is its creative power in proportion to its ontological worth?"[2]

It is of small importance when Marcel first mentioned this concept; it is of prime significance to elucidate just what the notion intends to tell us. The importance of this concept for Marcel's moral philosophy is above question. Marcel himself says that fidelity holds

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[1] EBHD, p.66.

[2] BH, p.96. It is significant for me that this phrase sparked me to comment, in my personal notes, on my first reading of Being and Having: "I like this term. It seems to say that fidelity must constantly be affirmed and thus created."

"a truly central place . . . in the general economy of my thought".[3] This notion must be regarded as Marcel's most distinctive contribution to the field of moral theory.

Assuming, for the time being, that there is a certain kind of fidelity which is the essence of ethical life, it becomes necessary to describe the variant forms of alleged faithfulness which are unsatisfactory. One of these divergent forms may be called the "fidelity of sclerosis";[4] we shall discover that it shares many of the faults of a rules morality. Another mongrel form of the real might be called the "fidelity of malignancy"; we shall find that it is much akin to the position of moral anarchy. But it is always easier to negate the alternatives by criticism than it is to present a positive picture of the "fidelity of health"; it is this we must try to do before closing this essay. We will conclude, finally, by pointing to some probable strengths and possible weaknesses in the position of Marcel.

B. Fidelity as Sclerosis

Hardening of the arteries in the realm of morals would be the process of making certain unjustifiable assumptions concerning the nature of myself, the other and time. The assumption is simply this: The act of commitment whereby I commit a part of my future to another is a kind of Joshuan fiat in which myself, the other and time,

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[3]CF, p.149.

[4]This term, "sclerosis," is used in the same context by Marcel in essay "Obedience and Fidelity" in HV, p.131. In the essay "Creative Fidelity" in CF, synonomous terms are "rancidity" and "staleness," p.153. Sclerosis means "conformism" to Marcel, CF, pp.184-194. Speaking of Marcel's notion of fidelity, David E. Roberts, op.cit., p.290, speaks of "inert conformism" which "replaces the continuous, active struggle to be faithful to a presence.. . with the sclerosis of habitual conformity to something which is . . . settled once and for all, regardless of my response."

as it were, stand still.[5]

Obviously this kind of assumption is seldom overtly made but it is implicit in a certain way of ignoring the change bound to take place in all these elements. Sclerosis sets in when we look away from the fact that our life is fleeting: "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."[6]

My-self. We cannot ignore the fact that "my-self"--yesterday, today and tomorrow--is not a simple, unrevised identity. "My-self" is constantly becoming from what it was to what it is and developing into what it will be. The change in the self is part and parcel of this life. How many of us have casually leafed through diary notes of several years back and suddenly been startled by a sentence or phrase? "Did I really believe that?" we ask. A hazy mist seems to separate "my-self" today and the self that wrote several years ago.

The Shakespearean formula, then, "To thy own self be true"[7] seems less clear on close scrutiny. How may I know my-self? How may I be true to a constantly changing self? It is these pertinent questions, however, that we try to avoid by abstraction from concrete reflection. This avoidance may take several forms.

For one, we could say that my present self is to be ignored in favour of a transcendent reality; but that turns out to be the blatant kind of abstraction which Marcel abhores.

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[5] Joshua 10:12-14.

[6] James 4:14.

[7] Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 1.

A second alternative might be to consider faithfulness as a "point of honour". Such persistence, which ignores the cost, is reminescent of the vow of Jephthah, the Israelite judge, who promised to sacrifice the first living creature he met on the road home if God would grant him victory over the enemy.[8] The sclerosis here is simply the self-centered concentration on the power of the will. Marcel says: "I cannot really confuse this attachment of the soul to its own glory--the most arid, strained, and irritable of all the forms of self-love--with that which I have all my life called Fidelity."[9]

A possible third approach might be to regard myself as the permanent element in the changing scene. It is this position that is really the heart of the first and second alternatives. But does not this positing of a permanent soul belie much of our experience? Do I not experience vast inner changes in mood and attitude? Are these simply a series of mirages? The external changes I experience are even more obvious. Only the unaware can resist this evidence. To ignore the fact of the change in my-self is to subject myself to a self-imposed dillusion. Certainly I owe myself sincerity. Indeed, Marcel sees this alternative in even worse light. It is lower than just insincerity; it is self-worship. He says that in such self-assurance I "banish the Real to infinity, and then dare to usurp its place and dress myself up in its stolen attributes."[10]

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[8]Judges 11:30-40.

[9]BH, p.53.

[10]BH, p.56. This position will later be observed to diverge from that of Kierkegaard.

The Other. When we speak of "the other" we refer to the person or persons who are involved in this hypothetical situation. The assumption here is that no act having moral implications can be committed which incurs individual consequences only. Morals involve at least two people. That is to say, the act of the particular individual never finds its total significance apart from the way it reacts on "the other".

What has been said of my-self may be reiterated in large measure vis à vis "the other". He no more stays an identity than "my-self". Who has not had the experience of meeting a member of the family again after years of absence and of realising the inner and outer changes that have occurred in the interim period?[11]

The same alternatives mentioned above present themselves from this point of view. They seem equally reprehensible. The permanence seemingly offered by a transcendent ideal, holding "my-self" and "the other" together, falls apart under slight scrutiny. Though this type of formulation is philosophically passé, we must recognise that the consideration of "the other" in contemporary thought seems to have grown out of the arid soil of such discredited idealism. Such an abstraction from the concrete arena of life will hardly suffice to unite the inter-human intercourse which its default has brought to light. This point is confirmed at least in Marcel's philosophical development. He reflects: "I suspect that

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[11] MBI, p.187, where Marcel refers to seeing a stranger with a "flacid face" and, with a shock of recognition, remembershim as the boy with the "red cheeks" he know as a child.

my grievance against transcendental idealism stimulated my inquiry into the metaphysical implications of sense-experience as such."[12]

What other approach presents itself? Can we imagine faithfulness for the preservation of honour to become a live option from this standpoint? Jepthah's daughter was the victim rather than the beneficiary of this approach. Nor could we posit permanence in the selfhood of the other. That person is subject to all of the variables common to my-self.

The formula "To the other be true" is then unreliable also. A promise, for instance, kept by adherence to one of the above mentioned alternatives is really an affront to "the other" since it is a form of misrepresentation; Marcel makes it plain that a decision not to note the occurance of change, e.g. in the physical appearance of the other, is nothing but to lie. To accept in advance the necessity of fulfilling a mode of acting which may not coincide with my concern at that time is to "consent in advance to lie to someone else".[13] <u>This kind of fidelity is ultimately betrayal</u>.

<u>Time</u>. Marcel says that victory over time must include fidelity.[14] The "fidelity of sclerosis" seeks to ignore the problem posed by the passage of time. In the moment of promisory activity it seems to say that tomorrow

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[12] PE, p.88.
[13] BH, p.50.
[14] C.f. BH, p.14.

you and I and circumstances will remain the same as if time stood still. Marcel explicitly refutes such a theory.

The problem lies in trying to conceive time as a filing cabinet into which certain "bare fact" cards are inserted. But from where does time derive this substantial reality? Marcel says:

> Time cannot be compared with a medium into which consciousnesses are inserted, a medium in relation to which such 'insertions' are contingent. It is the very negation of that.[15]

It is this facet of idealism, which conceives time as containing images formed by action in the past and which may be related in story form, that cannot stand up under reflection. Let us look at the faithful promise as an historical action: It is illegitimate to conceive of it simply as a concrete event. This is an ellicit abstraction. As Marcel says: "Belief in an immovable past is due to an optical error of the spirit."[16] Is it not true to say, however, that at such and such a time on a certain day in the past I made a promise to a particular person? Can the reality of that ever change? Marcel would not deny this. That reality, he admits, "remains involved in the interpretation which renews and recreates the action."[17]

This is to say that the history of the promise is to some extent an inner reality. This is borne out in Marcel's enigmatic expression:

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[15] MJ, p.129.
[16] BH, p.129.
[17] BH, p.129

> My history is not transparent to me. It is only my history in so far as it is not transparent to me.[18]

In earlier writing Marcel said:

> I am always and at every moment more than the totality of predicates that an enquiry made by myself--or by someone else--about myself . . . would be able to bring to light.[19]

And again:

> But I repeat we must not identify memory with a collection or aggregate. To recall really means to re-live (in accord with certain modalities) it does not mean to re-read a note.[20]

The danger we are attempting to elucidate here is this: The tendency to ignore change by positing a permanence in time itself. Marcel, in his Gifford Lectures, referred to this tendency as likening time to the "static eternity of the concept".[21] Such an abstraction would keep the promise intact simply by remaining with me as "the used, stale present".[22] But time "flies" and "drags" as well as "stands still". It would be as unwarranted to ignore the transitory essence time as it would be to disregard the mutations in myself and the other. In fact, this triadic change seems bound up together.

The Rule. We have suggested that by positing a static "soul," a constant "point of honour" or a "permanent transcendent," we might be able to gain a victory over

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[18] BH, p.129.
[19] MJ, p.199.
[20] MJ, p.164.
[21] MBI, p.191.
[22] MBI, p.194.

infidelity. But we have seen that fidelity in these grand manners is only illusory. Is there not a fourth way suggested by the thesis presented in the previous chapter?

We might formulate a rule: "Thou shalt not be unfaithful." It will immediately be noted that this is not exactly a rule. It is more like a Kantian imperative. We are still left to ask ourselves just how we fulfill the demand in specific situations.

It might be possible to reduce this to the commandment rule: "Thou shalt not bear false witness." No doubt this will give us more specific guidance but it is open to the objections noted earlier, i.e., it remains equivocal in certain instances or it drives us to a submoral level if taken on its own terms.

There is a further objection to either one of these formulations, however: The policy here exhibited leads us to sterotype all selves in time under a certain category. The policy leads to a "fidelity of sclerosis". We must always remember that rules such as these are formulated by selves subject to all the relativity of their special location in space, time, culture, climate, etc. It is the nature of our existence to obscure the rule etched in the hardest stone. If this rule has any meaning at all it must be a pointer to something beyond itself.

A Hospital Situation. In Being and Having, and again in the William James Lectures, Marcel refers to a hospital visitation as an example of a possible "sclerotic fidelity". I quote from the former:

> I promised C____ the other day that I would come back to the nursing home where he has been dying for weeks, and see him again . . . And yet I must in honesty admit that the pity I felt the other day, is today no more

> than a theoretical pity . . . I have to recognise that this impulse no longer exists, and it is no longer in my power to do more than imitate it by a pretence which some part of me refuses to swallow . . . I must accept this fact with shame and sorrow.[23]

In reflections sometime in late 1929 or during 1930, Marcel suggests the following:

> I will question myself no further on this point; enough to have recognised that in binding myself by a promise I have acknowledged the presence of an inner hierarchy, consisting of a ruling principle, and a life whose details remain unpredictable, but which the principle subjects to itself, or, still more accurately, which it pledges itself to keep under its yoke.[24]

Fortunately, for the influence of Marcel's philosophy, he does reconsider this conclusion. Later he admits:

> To swear fidelity--whatever the object to which the vow is taken--what is it really but committing myself to ignore the deepest part of my being . . . Indeed, can a commitment exist that is not a betrayal?[25]

Here Marcel recognises the threat of sclerosis. He concludes these early inconclusive reflections by suggesting that fidelity is "most unmistakable" when mixed with "Patience" and "Humility".[26]

In the William James Lectures, Marcel calls this earlier example a "relatively trivial one".[27] I think, on the contrary, it is a significant example. How many of us have had a similar experience? Do I not know exactly what he means when I reflect on my visit to Miss P____ in

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[23] BH, pp.47-48.

[24] BH, p.49.

[25] BH, p.51.

[26] BH, p.51.

[27] EBHD, p.70.

hospital last Saturday? The promise to make a return visit seems to be crowded out by the other pressures of life. The very fact that I feel these pressures indicates that in some way I have fallen away from the simple straightforwardness of the moment of initial promise. What is the way out of the dilemma? In the context of what we have already said it cannot be regarded as a satisfactory answer to "steel myself against change" and return to hospital as if all were the same. Marcel is correct when he calls this "an essentially dishonest act".[28]

Such is the "fidelity of sclerosis". To admit, as we may, that the result of this particular "dishonesty" might benefit the patient, does not alter the nature of the case. It may be that it is better to make the return visit than to forget about it, but let us not think that the terms of fidelity are met by this external act. Here we have reduced the moral promise to the lesser of two evils. It is Marcel's intention to show, however, that fidelity need not be so desecrated.

C. Fidelity as Malignancy

To ignore permanence by positing only change--that is malignant fidelity. More favourably it might be called "the ethic of transparent honesty".[29] But can this favourable name be supported?

The notion of malignancy is used here to contrast with the opposite extreme of sclerosis. If sclerosis in morals is the refusal to recognise the elements of change,

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[28] EBHD, p.71.

[29] BH, p.50.

malignancy is the moral desease which refuses to grasp any identity. The picture is one of rapidly multiplying moments, each containing a promise, and clinging together without any systematic structure. In such a picture commitments of a momentary nature shoot off in all directions like the irregular growth of a malignant tumour.

Lest it be thought that the preceding is a slight exaggeration, we should remember that Marcel has opposed from his earliest writings those who make a fetish of impermanence and immediacy in morals. In the Metaphysical Journal he spoke out against "pure ethical monadism".[30] In 1930, in a lecture given to students, entitled, "Some Remarks on the Irreligion of Today," he attacks the position made famous by M. André Gide in his novel Les Nourritures Terrestres. In that novel, Gide praised the "fulness of the unclouded instant, savoured in all its novelty".[31] This only reminds us of what one feels after he has been in an art gallery all day; one experiences a "satiety of novelty"; one knows that "dialectic has the last word here."[32]

Marcel continued this challenge in his lectures at Harvard University. Again, Gide is singled out as the primary culprit--in France at least.[33] He says of his own philosophy:

> For my own part, I have always been on the scent of novelty in every domain--no doubt to excess--but at the same time I have always been on guard against

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[30] Supra, note 61 of chapter on "Inadequacy of Rules".

[31] BH, p.198.

[32] BH, p.198.

[33] C.f. EBHD, pp.66, 69 and 146.

> this too simple fashion of conceiving our attitude with respect to duration and more exactly with respect to creatures who endure.[34]

No doubt it will enable us to see the nature of the attitude under consideration if we contrast it with the sclerotic attitude along the same lines of analysis previously applied.

My-self. The disbelief in a durable moral act is based to a large extent on the destruction of the self in the philosophy of David Hume. To conceive of the self as nothing other than juxtaposed "states-of-consciousness" is to destroy the unity necessary for definite moral commitment. The only unity that can be salvaged out of such a conception of "my-self" is a certain kind of sincerity promoted by Gide, which Marcel epitomises as "accord with one's self in the immediate".[35]

For Marcel, rather, the self must be more than just a "state-of-consciousness" else knowledge and human meaning are impossible.[36] It would appear, however, that Marcel's argument for this position has not always been clear. In Being and Having, the inconclusive reflections on fidelity contain a strange line of reasoning.[37] In essence he says: The doctrine of "states-of-consciousness" is wrong self-evidently since the very assertion is a form of knowledge. In the same way, to denegrate the possibility of true fidelity is obviously false since it robs men of the "loftiest

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[34] EBHD, p.66.
[35] EBHD, p.69.
[36] MJ, p.296.
[37] BH, pp.54-56.

experiences that men think they have known".[38] Neither could I conceive of "Being" if the iconoclasts were right, yet I can and do conceive of "Being". If I have conceived of it does this not mean that I have experienced it? Yes, says, Marcel, in reply to the question.

The reasoning here is especially unsteady: Assuming for now that the initial criticism of Hume's philosophy is correct, a proposition by no means as self-evident as Marcel claims, can we automatically advance to say that if the first kind of knowledge--empirical knowledge--is possible, we have automatically made room for knowledge of value? Much modern philosophy weighs heavily against such an easy assumption. Further, it seems that Marcel has almost brought in the ontological argument once again. Can he not conceive of a "unicorn" as easily as he conceives of "Being"? And how can we judge which has reality? Here "Being" is seemingly conceived as a "that"--a conception Marcel usually insists is foreign to "Being".[39]

Marcel's later reflections upon "my-self" show greater sureness. Marcel claims that there is something about self which is "intrinsically irreducible to succession"

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[38] BH, p.54.

[39] BH, p.122. This refusal of the problematic in relation to Being is after all one of Marcel's firm contributions to philosophy. It is true that the "sense of being" is a highlight of human experience which the "sense of a unicorn" is not. It is true too that Marcel is probably on firm ground established by Husserl in his phenomenological method. But it is probably Marcel's strong point that he usually simply posits the "sense of Being" as a point of ontological faith rather than to argue for it in what might turn out to be a new form of the ontological argument for the existence of a "Being <u>that</u> exists".

because it is a "mental abstraction".[40] To this extent Marcel retains the idealist position.[41] At the same time, Marcel again in the 1961 lectures notes the "limitations inherent in the empirical self considered as such."[42] There follows the suggestion that the "moi" serves as something like a shutter on a camera; this shutter often malfunctions when the "I" is focused on the shutter, causing self-consciousness in the pejorative sense.[43]

The point here is that while Marcel refuses to see the self as the creative principle in idealist fashion, he just as staunchly opposes a sort of inertia which would understand the self to be a passive spectator to swiftly passing images. The self understood as a cinemagraphic screen would obviate the possibility of moral action. Here, as in other places, Marcel asserts a moral objection to a philosophy that would otherwise logically lead to life seen as absurdity.

The Other. What applies in the foregoing section applies here with equal strength. According to the "states-of-consciousness" theory we have no more right to conceive of identity in "the other" than we have in ourselves. The formula, "To the other be true," loses its force here by default. There is no other towards which trueness can apply. To affirm this state of affairs is a counsel of

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[40] MBI, p.191.

[41] MBI, p.189. "A succession is only a succession for an awareness that in some sense transcends it."

[42] EBHD, p.101.

[43] EBHD, p.101.

absurdity. It is meaningless to advise some kind of sincerity under such circumstances. The resultant faithfulness could only have an irregular growth--a "fidelity of malignancy".

Time. According to this mode of thought, time might be epitomised as the "endless changing flow of sensation".[44] The "self" and "the other" in such a conception can only be totally immersed in time--never to rise above it. What would be the consequences of such an affirmation?

Life could only absurdly be said to have meaning. That meaning (which the French call "sens" and the Germans "Bedeutung" or Richtung") can have no ultimate significance. Life would necessarily be a slave's existence compounded in its hopelessness by the fact that the slave could have no knowledge of his enslavement.[45] Or to change the analogy, I could only be conceived as a bit actor unaccountably thrown on to the stage without any acquaintance with the plot or the theme. From this position "consecration" to a cause or commitment to a person or idea would only be external and accidental in nature. Such is the position that Sartre affirms and exalts.

Marcel replies that all this is not true. The slave always retains some awareness of having been outraged. The atheistic existentialist reveals this same awareness when he raises the question of whether or not this bit part on stage does have a producer and, hence, some discernible structure. And is there not something about moral commitment which points beyond mere externality?

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[44] MBI, p.191.

[45] MBI, p.173.

To apply this specifically to the matter of time, I quote from Marcel in the Metaphysical Journal, where he says: "The more a being is, the less he is reduced to a simple succession of determinations."[46] The pure now is nothing but a succession of nows. But the experience of a "feeling that is very deep" defies the mode of pure nows to explain.[47] But this leads us to talk about "profundity"--a matter we shall hold in reserve for a while.

It suffices to say here that Marcel refuses to replace time in abstraction by its polarity of simple succession. Such a concept allows only for a series of unrelated events which may only absurdly be related to anything called morality. When such a relation is made it can only grow without structure into a "fidelity of malignancy".

Moral Anarchy. Marcel outlines a hypothetical moral dilemma as follows:[48] I find a notecase by accident. I try to return it to its owner but without success. What shall I do with it? Spend it on myself? Pay a debt? Help someone in poverty? Whatever I do, it must be a choice between such concrete possibilities. But it should be noted that such possibilities have their roots in my own life as it was before I found the notecase.

For Marcel this imaginary incident is more than just a test case in moral behaviour. Marcel explains that "my life" is not, like the notecase, found accidentally. He says: "My existence as a living being precedes this discovery

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[46] MJ, p.198.
[47] MJ, p.198.
[48] MBI, p.174.

of myself as a living being. One might even say that, by a fatal necessity, I pre-exist myself."[49] This must be seen as diametrically opposed to the Sartrean man who says: "Man's motto is to be a maker and, as a maker, to make himself and to be nothing but the self he has made for himself.'"[50]

Anarchy is not the proper substitute for rules.

A Marriage Situation. More crucial, says Marcel, than the "hospital situation" is the "marriage situation" where commitment is usually mutual. Proposal and promise of marriage is often made in an "exalted moment".[51] But is this moment anything more than a fleeting episode? What is there that gives this moment precedence over any other? We noted earlier that it cannot be done by giving self or any of its affirmations an ascendant role. Rather, Marcel asserts:

> I think it would be a thousand times better if I resolved to see in it nothing but a survival, a lingering shadow which melts right away under the light of thought . . .than to set up such idolatry at the centre of my life.[52]

Yet there is nothing more certain than Marcel's refusal to accept a "metaphysic of the instant" which he finds in Kierkegaard and George Bataille.[53] As we have seen, he attacks Gide most severely of all on this issue.[54] Sartre's

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[49] MBI, p.174.
[50] MBI, p.175.
[51] EBHD., p.70.
[52] BH, p.56.
[53] HV, p.189. Supra, note 10.
[54] Supra, note 31.

equation of choice with freedom is explicitly and carefully denied.[55] Yet we must be aware that it is a great deal easier to disagree with and find gaps in the other person's position than it is to establish one's own position. The positive formulation which Marcel has attempted now claims our attention.

D. Fidelity as Health

In this vital section it will assist us if we study the development of the notion of "creative fidelity" in somewhat of a chronological fashion. Thus, by moving from reflections in Being and Having we will finally arrive at the more mature statement in the William James Lectures. We will then observe how this development has cast light upon the specific elements of "my-self," "the other" and "time". The material example of healthful fidelity will necessarily find itself in the family relationships, especially in the father-son relation. Before reaching the stage of summation and final criticism it will also be necessary to indicate exactly why Marcel does not consider it possible to study these matters from a purely moral stance; that is we shall be obliged to speak of "Being" or "ontological weight" in relation to fidelity.

Significant works of Marcel's are omitted from this survey because they do not bear precisely on the problem of fidelity. They do not, however, in any way detract from the analysis which follows.

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[55] PE, pp.32-66.

Survey of "A Metaphysical Diary" on Fidelity.

a. Introduction. "Man is the only being who makes promises," exclaimed Nietzsche. With that remark Marcel commences his diary reflections on February 28th, 1929, concerning fidelity. Thus begins a lifetime of serious reflection on the question: "How can I promise--commit my future?" The discussion in this diary is characterised by personal involvement with the question and by deep uncertainty as to the proper solution. The result, as earlier discussion has indicated, is an intense statement of the problem, with only an inconclusive, and at times confused, statement of a possible answer.[56] The whole discussion is marked by an admirable candour.

b. Analysis. In 1961 Marcel notes that his 1932 and 1933 researches into the nature of fidelity were motivated by a primary obsession: "The necessity of restoring to human experience its ontological weight."[57] A careful reading of these reflections bears this out. Marcel is not prone to speak as a mere moralist; neither can we say that the question of morals, per se, was the fundamental feature of these initial enquiries.

Possibly we would not do injustice to the reflections in these pages if we attempted to epitomise them in a single paragraph: Fidelity begins and continues with the recognition of something permanent in a relationship.[58] This is "an act of transcendence" on the part of the agent.[59]

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[56] C.f. note 37.

[57] EBHD, p.74.

[58] BH, p.96.

[59] BH, p.54.

Yet this recognition is in some sense conferred by the "shadow of another fidelity" which lies across our commitment.[60] The necessary condition for this recognition-confement is a "sense of stewardship," not toward ourselves or the other person only, but "towards an active and superior principle".[61] But "principle" is a "disgustingly abstract word"[62] and what is really meant is responsibility towards a personal and absolute Being.[63] It is this ontological presance which forms a bridge, giving to the relationship itself a permanence. Here we see the sense in which fidelity is a sort of cement holding together the "mysterious relation between grace and faith".[64] Examples of this "mysterious relation" are found in the recognition of Ulysses by Eumaeus, by the realisation of Christ by the disciples on the Emmaus road and by the Church as a "perpetuated witness, an act of fidelity".[65] It cannot be unimportant that the virtues of "Patience" and "Humility" are constructive elements always present with "Fidelity";[66] we see this triad in the face of those who have "the least concern to cut a figure in their own eyes".[67]

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[60] BH, p.55.

[61] BH, p.15.

[62] BH, p.15.

[63] BH, p.96.

[64] BH, p.54. I am dubious about this. It seems like a position on "deserved grace". But Marcel would no doubt remind us that he is not speaking of "Grace" but rather its human analogy. There must be an openness to receive grace, on this level, at least.

[65] BH, p.96.

[66] BH, p.56.

[67] BH, p.53.

c. Criticism. We cannot be too sure that we have come to any firm conclusions here. I have previously characterised the reflections on fidelity in Being and Having as "inconclusive". I would not want to change that assessment. Nearly all of the positive statements are taken back, re-examined, and sometimes cast aside. I think the above paragraph shows Marcel affirming that any fidelity that lasts must be associated with an "ontological permanence" and that only a fidelity that lasts has any "ontological weight".[68] Yet it must be apparent that this kind of language is in need of further refinement and that this type of conclusion is open to severe criticism from all sides. Possibly this explains why any apparent conclusions noted above can only be regarded as tentative.

Survey of "On the Ontological Mystery" on Fidelity.

a. Introduction. The references to fidelity in this significant essay are few, but because of the vital nature of the essay we should at least take them into consideration. It is worthy of note if only for the fact that Marcel believes it is here that he first mentioned the notion of "creative fidelity".[69] This essay is published in English in the small volume, The Philosophy of Existence.

b. Analysis. It is a discussion on the vices associated with technique which serve as a launching pad to the consideration of fidelity in this essay. Marcel shows how the notion of hope includes that which is beyond

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[68] BH, p.96.

[69] Supra, note 1.

man's capability, through technical progress, and yet there is a response man must give for hope to become a reality. Hope is creatively active rather than listless waiting.[70]

In the midst of this essay we plunge right into a description and near definition of "creative fidelity". In a sense there is no more forthright presentation of this idea in any of the later writings. Here, as in Being and Having, the ontological is the mode of permanence. The following quote may serve to indicate that fact:

> Thus if creative fidelity is conceivable, it is because fidelity is ontological in its principle, because it prolongs presence which itself corresponds to a certain kind of hold which being has upon us; because it multiplies and deepens the effect of this presence almost unfathomably in our lives.[71]

This notion of the ontological permanence of "creative fidelity" is described by Marcel by the term "presence". The word appears at a crucial point in the above quotation. Previously, in an effort to show that this faithfulness is not inert conformity to a principle, Marcel said: "Fidelity is the active perpetuation of presence, the renewal of its benefits--of its virtue which consists in a mysterious incitement to create."[72] Again, from a passage which Marcel considers important enough to reiterate in the William James Lectures, he says that "fidelity is always bound up with a presence, or even with

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[70]An analysis of the notion of hope must await a later section.

[71]PE, p.23.

[72]PE, p.22.

something that can and should be upheld in us and before us as a presence."[73]

"Presence" is to be distinguished as a "reality" rather than an "object" or an "effigy" of an object. An "effigy" would be "less than" the object; "presence" is "more than" the object. To read in the news-paper, for example, of the death of somebody I know is vastly different than to read the same of somebody I do not know. Commenting on this "test" which death puts to "presence," Marcel says: "In this case, everything depends on me, on my inward attitude of maintaining this presence which could be debased into an effigy."[74] The meaning here is more than merely maintaining them in the so-called objectivity of my memory. The survival is much more "mysterious" than that. Marcel's own words are crucial at this juncture:

> A presence is a reality; it is a kind of influx; it depends upon us to be permeable to this influx, but not, to tell the truth, to call it forth. Creative fidelity consists in maintaining ourselves actively in a permeable state; and there is a mysterious interchange between this free act and the gift granted in response to it.[75]

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[73] EBHD, p.66. Note that according to this definition betrayal is just as possible as fidelity and indeed threatens to envelop our entire human world. The reference is to EBHD, p.66 where Marcel does his own translation rather than to the PE passage translated by Manya Harari, p.22.

[74] PE, p.23.

[75] PE, p.24.

To further his discussion of "presence," Marcel notes that its influx is not before me or within me but "coesse," with me. The assurance of this presence is not a straight-forward, empirical, knowable; it is discoverable in people who are genuinely available. We all know people who are more at our disposal than others. One person may "loan" me help; another will be with me with his whole self. For the former, however beneficent, I am an object; for the latter I am a presence.

We must note too that "presence" always reveals itself in the intersubjective relation. Marcel says this can happen in a flash: "Presence is something which reveals itself immediately and unmistakably in a look, a smile, an intonation or a handshake."[76] This intersubjectivity voids the validity of the subject-object dilemma. As Marcel says: "Presence involves a reciprocity which is excluded from any relation of subject to object or of subject to subject-object."[77]

c. Criticism. It appears that for Marcel the "formal cause" or existential possibility of fidelity is the reality of presence which protrudes into our life in a recognisable but not a demanding way through the in-depth encounter and affirmation between persons. It would appear that the "notion of spiritual heritage" and the concept of "the essence of community," which we introduced in earlier chapters, are ideas coincident with the kind of presence Marcel attempts to define as the centre of fidelity. Quite

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[76] PE, p.26.

[77] PE, p.26.

admittedly, for Marcel and for us, this presence remains ill-defined in the 1933 essay. Yet we may discover that it is difficult to advance past this stage of vagueness. As Marcel says:

> It is a notion [creative fidelity] which is the more difficult to grasp and, above all, to define conceptually, because of its underlying and unfathomable paradox, and because it is at the very centre of the realm of the meta-problematical.[78]

It will be noticed that this discussion of fidelity has a good deal more sureness about it than do the reflections in Being and Having. I fear this is accomplished at the cost of concreteness. There is not here the same consciousness of the personal struggle to be genuinely faithful. This is evidenced in a certain abstractness in language. In Being and Having there is a struggle to discover the "ontological weight" of fidelity; in this essay it is rather forcefully asserted. Thus, there is greater conclusiveness here, though not necessarily more persuasive power.

Survey of "Obedience and Fidelity" on Fidelity

a. Introduction. Because we want to use them in a special way, we leave aside for the time being the two essays concerning family relations in Homo Viator: "Creative Vow as the Essence of Fatherhood" and "The Mystery of the Family". Instead we notice briefly the short essay "Obedience and Fidelity" in this same volume. The title indicates a distinction which Marcel desires to make between rigid and open response to another person.

There are possibly two matters that call for our attention in this essay: First, an example of "creative

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[78] PE, p.21.

fidelity" in action in the aesthetic realm. Second, a quotation which gives us a slightly different definition, or a new approach, to the "ontological permanence" characteristic of "creative fidelity".

b. Analysis. It is common for Marcel to turn to an example from the aesthetic realm of life to illustrate his point in the area of religion and morality. (Possibly at this point he shows less concern to dissect life into component parts than Kierkegaard, who usually associated the arts with a dilettante approach to living.) The artist becomes an analogical reference, in this essay, to "creative fidelity".

The hypothetical picture is as follows: An artist's paintings of still-life suddenly gain the acclaim of the critics and the public. Instead of continuing to create still-life pictures the artist turns to seascape studies. "Treason!" shout the critics and the public echoes them. Not necessarily, says Marcel. This may be an example of "creative fidelity". To remain in the status quo position for the sake of success often turns a creative artist into a mere manufacturer.

Of course, it is obvious that the change to seascapes may be a form of betrayal too. It is impossible for an outsider to judge such a matter in any final sense. Only from inside the activity can judgement be made and that view itself remains imperfect. Marcel says:

> It is only by an always imperfect comparison between the accomplished work and the indistinct consciousness of the work to be accomplished that he can decide whether he has been faithful or not.[79]

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[79] HV, p.130.

It is hard to stay alive in spirit. Yet such spiritual vitality (not necessarily religious) is the only way to accomplish true living. Marcel shows how the ego and social pressure work toward the person's defeat. He says: "The causeswithin and without us which militate in favour of sclerosis and devitalisation are innumerable."[80] Only the artist who resists these pressures can remain an artist--alive, creative, faithful.

c. Criticism. The quotation which strikes us as significant in this essay is as follows:

> It is in this way . . . that a code of ethics centered on fidelity is irresistably led to become attached to what is more than human, to a desire for the unconditional which is the requirement and the very mark of the Absolute in us.[81]

This statement is more important for its implications than for its direct assertion. First, it does allow that there may be such a legitimate thing as a "code" of ethics. Second, a proper code--"centred on fidelity"--leads us beyond the strict confines of rules. Third, this "desire for the unconditional" is something that the psychologist or the sociologist might be able to understand if they are not too biased.

It seems to me then that there are slight openings here worthy of exploration; First, there is the possibility that a certain ethical code might serve a didactic purpose until the child, adult or society is capable of moving beyond it. Second, fidelity is a key concept because there

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[80] HV, p.131.

[81] HV, p.134. Supra, note 74 in chapter on "Inadequacy of Rules".

is something present in in-depth relations which drivesus beyond the boundaries of rules. Third, the secular humanist, as epitomised in the behavioral scientist, might be able to enter into dialogue with the theologian on the basis of a "desire for the unconditional" as he finds it expressed in healthy family relationships. This may be the most empirical way of expressing the "presence" of "creative fidelity".

Though we are a long way from the goal of giving proper definition, description and application to the concept of "creative fidelity," this essay is one of some value. The example and the quotation are typical of the way Marcel frequently focuses on this issue.

Survey of Creative Fidelity on Fidelity

a. Introduction. In the volume originally published as Du Refus à L' Invocation in 1940, and which appeared in English in 1964 as Creative Fidelity, there is a substantial essay on this subject. Though comments on fidelity sprinkle the essays of this volume, it will be appropriate to study the essay "Creative Fidelity" from which the English title is developed. It is probable that this is the most definitive single statement Marcel makes on the fidelity which we have described as Marcel's most significant contribution to the field of ethics. Yet in that it reiterates much that he had already said on the subject, we need not give undue attention to it.

b. Analysis. Marcel in retrospect claims that he has ever been enthralled by two matters. First, he mentions an "obsession with beings" as individuals and in community.

Second, he refers to the "exigence of being". These often appear as contrary concerns. But Marcel says of his position:

> It seems to me that I accepted the view a priori, long before I was able to justify it to my own satisfaction that the more we are able to know the individual being, the more we shall be oriented, and as it were directed towards, a grasp of being as such.[82]

Marcel then, in the same retrospective mood, draws an analogy between a certain aspect of individual being on the human level, the aspect of fidelity, and the same concern raised to its ultimate plane, the relation of faith, based on the "individual being"--"being as such" unity:

> I will say that faith on the one hand became clear to me from the moment I thought directly about fidelity; while fidelity, on the other hand, was clarified beginning with the thou, with presence itself construed as a function of the thou.[83]

It is "the tragedy of fidelity" which draws Marcel's attention as the extreme edge where it borders on the field of faith. He recalls his drama, L'Iconoclaste, as an illustration: Abel Renaudier secretly is in love with Viviane, the wife of his best friend, Jacques Delorme. Viviane is not an accomplice to this love. When she dies, and Jacques subsequently prepares to marry Madeleine Chazot, Abel becomes jealous. He hints to Jacques that Viviane might have been unfaithful to him. This evinces deep despair in Jacques. Only then does Abel discover that Jacques' remarriage came as a result of what he believed to be a message from the deceased Viviane to proceed in this manner. Abel, in panic and remorse, tries to restore Jacques' faith in himself and Viviane but the damage is beyond repair. From

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[82] CF, p.147.

[83] CF, p.148.

this tragedy Marcel draws conclusions on fidelity in relation to mystery, death and time.[84]

There appears in this essay a discussion which harks back to the interrogation of the notion of the promise in "A Metaphysical Diary".[85] The notion of "constancy" which we have noted in relation to the "ethics of sclerosis" is discussed. (We shall observe this more closely in a moment.) The notion of what Marcel in one place, speaking of Sartre, calls "the ethics of unconstraint"[86] appears in somewhat repetitive fashion. Of this notion, which we have designated as "malignancy," he says: First, it tends to identify myself with myself in this particular circumstance. To the question, "Am I my life?" it not only says, "yes," but affirms this with no reference to the past and to no future except the immediate one. Second, it contains a sort of fatalism about the future. It has an implicit, if not forthright, "Eat, drink, make merry, for tomorrow we die," attitude. As Marcel said of the later Gide's attempt to relate himself to Christianity:

> He was not able to see, or did he want to understand, that the ethic of the instant which was long his was linked much rather to the voluptuous hedonism of an Omar Khayyam than to the morality of the Gospel.[87]

Third, Marcel reiterates his emphasis, which we shall note grows stronger in later thought, that fidelity is a free venture that often involves great risk. He sees that to say, "All things are permissible," is an inadmissible way

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[84] CF, pp.150-152.
[85] CF, pp.150-160.
[86] PM, pp.118 and 135.
[87] PM, p.128.

of escaping the pressure of risk-taking. Fourth, Marcel sees the broader philosophy of "states of consciousness" as invalid on logical grounds, on account of the necessity for such a conclusion to be based on the findings of a higher kind of consciousness. He attempts to show that such a general epistemology is of no help to "instantaeneists" since, again, one can only favour such a corrupted position through a consciousness which is able to conceive of a more over-arching scheme of perpetual interhuman loyalty.[88]

Marcel does not fail to refer to "creative fidelity" in a positive way. Of this orientation, which we have designated as the "fidelity of health," he says what might be epitomised as follows. First, true fidelity is creative. Second, creative fidelity moves beyond the subjectivism of "I believe" and the objectivism of "I exist" to a "new immediacy" which is found to be a metaphysic based on my mundane experience. Third, the fidelity attained here is relational rather than propositional. Fourth, the separation between incredulous and mature fidelity is to be discovered by an attempt to discover and analyse the point where "incredulity coincides with a certain fundamental infidelity. Fifth, fidelity is grounded in "being" as over against the position of "having," which either by the route of reduction or by the refusal to qualify it, destroys the freedom which is essential to its creativity.[89]

c. Criticism. In this essay there are numerous matters which could receive extended attention. We confine

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[88]Cf. CF, pp.160-165.

[89]Cf. CF, pp.167-171.

ourselves to that which seems most helpful in formulating Marcel's general statement of fidelity.

We have seen that Marcel reacts strongly against any fidelity that hints of formalism. In this essay one finds the sole location where he seems to consider at any length the benefits of a fidelity of "constancy". He says that constancy is not in direct opposition to fidelity. He admits that there is an ambivalence surrounding human relations which makes it difficult to separate creative interaction from the constancy of habit. He even goes so far in these generally favourable remarks as to define "constancy" as "the rational skeleton of fidelity". But this is as close as he comes to affirming this rigid approach which he usually views in more negative terms. Indeed, in this essay he shows how constancy, in time, becomes an irritant and, finally, a source of aversion. This is because the maintenance of the status quo is practiced on the basis of pride in personal stability, habitual reaction to change or other similar forms of rigidity. There is in this static attitude a constant reassertion of the will which is a vital indication that the "ontological" has disappeared from the setting. This, then, represents the least derogatory approach to be found in Marcel's ethical statements toward the formal aspect of fidelity which he usually excludes more quickly. This statement gives greater balance to his work without invalidating his position.[90] We shall discuss the practical necessity of a more formal ethics at a later time.

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[90] C.f. CF, pp.154-167.

The relation which Marcel draws between fidelity and faith is full of insight. It helps us to see in a particular instance, the way Marcel believes philosophy, which gives attention to man, may offer considerable insight into a theistic faith which one accepts on another level of apprehension. It is significant to this study that in nearly every case, and certainly in this one, it is the moral frontier of the philosophy which borders on that which opens into what Marcel would see as purely revelatory.

To be more explicit about the fidelity-faith relation, it is instructive to take note of Marcel's drama, L'Iconoclaste. In this case mystery remains predominant in that it remains forever outside the realm of proof that Viviane communicated with her husband, Jacques, from the dead, telling him to marry again. In this case, as always for Marcel, mystery is not a "lacuna in our knowledge" but rather an illumination which gives moral direction. It was only when Abel deprived Jacques of this, through his jealous words, that life lost its meaning for this widower.

Fidelity in the midst of death must remain this side of intellectual knowledge in the realm of mystery. "This appetite to know" in the case of Jacques' relation to Viviane, for example, "which is at the root of our greatness as well as our misery, is transcended rather than satisfied in the apprehension of mystery."[91]

The significance of fidelity in relation to death is crucial for Marcel. It is of interest that this appears to have grown out of his own experience. We should recall that he believes the "presence" of his mother, dead since he

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[91] CF, p.152.

was four years of age, influenced his thought.[92] Further, his experience during World War I in attempting to trace missing persons confronted him again with the mystery of love in the midst of the apparent destruction of the person.[93] L'Iconoclaste, as a matter of fact, was based on an experience Marcel had in meeting a man who, rather like Jacques might have been, lived in happiness with a second wife while attached to his deceased wife in an astounding way.[94]

We can say then that Marcel's reflections on fidelity really took shape out of the context of what is almost exactly the religious question of immortality.[95] This enables us to see that not only did Marcel's philosophical reflections on fidelity lead him to an understanding of faith,[96] but the reflections concerning fidelity pressed in upon him when he was confronted with the "boundary situation" of fidelity, in the throes of seeming destruction, seeking to find a way to survive. Thus, the profound reflections in Being and Having, on fidelity struggling under the burden of time,[97] gained their impetus from the case where time opens out into the abyss of absence.[98] Marcel, like many

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[92] Supra, note 3 in chapter on "Philosophical Method".

[93] PE, p.90.

[94] Cannot locate reference.

[95] Supra, note 32 in essay "Mutual Engagement".

[96] Supra, note 83.

[97] Supra, notes 37 and 56.

[98] Marcel himself sees this relation of time and death in relation to the mystery of fidelity; CF, p.152.

existential thinkers, gathered his bearings from the extreme situation, but with greater penetration than most of them, he has reflected his way back into the less dizzy spheres where man usually lives. It is along these lines that a "metaphysic of fidelity" has taken shape in his hands.[99]

Survey of Mystery of Being on Fidelity. It is peculiar that in the most substantial philosophical work Marcel has accomplished, this important notion of "creative fidelity" does not appear. Certainly there is related material in chapters four, seven and ten of the first series of Gifford Lectures. Also, chapter eight in the second series contains relevant material. In a sense some of these lectures may be said to lay a better foundation, for the earlier and later writings on the subject of fidelity.

We will find it necessary to refer to the Gifford Lectures before this essay is finished. These lectures contain nothing that contradicts the notion under examination; they merely represent a slightly different way of approaching similar problems.

Survey of The Existential Background of Human Dignity on Fidelity.

a. Introduction. In the chapter, entitled "Fidelity," in the William James Lectures, Marcel does manage to bring some new light to bear on the subject. He discusses the dilemma of just how to be faithful as presented in an early unpublished play, Un Juste. Marcel then proceeds to an analysis of the subject based on the play. He closes by

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[99]Marcel gives Péguy and Scheler some credit for sighting the problem but Marcel seems to indicate that in this area he has moved along according to his initiative and creativity; CF, p.153.

relating his position to earlier writings which we have already discussed.

b. Analysis. Un Juste, the unfinished and unpublished play which Marcel began in 1918 is significant in two ways. First, it is probably the first time Marcel became concerned with the "problem of fidelity".[100] Second, it poses the existential question in a new way: The play reveals the ambiguity a patriot feels in many wars. Growing out of Marcel's experience of a sincere friend who during World War I sent pacifist literature to the military front, leading to riots and subsequent deaths by firing squad, Marcel poses the question of the play:

> It is concerned with whether Bernard does or does not have the right to pronounce before another person a judgment which is going to have a profound effect upon that person's conduct.[101]

To this dilemma Marcel gives no final answer, except that the situation itself is a controlling factor affecting any principle which may apply and that the decision must be "existential" in the sense that the speaker accepts what he believes to be the worst consequences for himself when he takes this responsibility upon him.[102]

The ontology of fidelity comes in for further inspection. Marcel recalls the phrase in "A Metaphysical Diary" where he says: "Being as the place of fidelity."[103]

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[100] EBHD, p.60.

[101] EBHD, p.63.

[102] Cf. EBHD, p.63. We should recall Marcel's position on means and ends in morals as analysed; supra, notes 14 and 15 in chapter on "Inadequacy of Rules".

[103] BH, p.41.

Being ought to be understood in a "verbal" way with the analogy of an increasing "light". Thus Marcel can say: "To live in the light of fidelity is to move in the direction of Being itself."[104] This remains inadequate since it seems as if "Being" is used here as a noun--a goal toward which we might move. This can only be solved by conceiving of "a sort of hierarchy among modes of Being so that it would then be possible to be more or less fully."[105] The faithful person is more; the dilettante or dour moralist is less.

We may make the following restrictive statements about this ontologically weighted fidelity: It comes to us as a "presence". As such, it may be "evoked" but not "grasped". This "presence" is sensed in the I-thou relationship. This prevents it from falling into subjectivism; the category is that of a "concrete us". Such a relation is formed around an art piece that is cherished. Language tends to degrade this "presence" because of its tendency to objectify into a "principle" or a "cause," as so often happens in a commemorative speech.[106]

Marcel closes by placing stress on the element of "risk" in fidelity. The formula: "I shall treat these conditions whatever they may be as negligible," is dishonest because it fails to acknowledge the risk of commitment.[107]

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[104] EBHD, p.65.

[105] EBHD, pp.65-66.

[106] Cf. EBHD, pp.65-69; Supra, the discussion on "The Dangers in Language" in chapter on "Philosophical Language".

[107] EBHD, p.71; Supra, note 77 discussing the "risk" involved with true fidelity in chapter on "Being and Having: The Ontological Foundation for Morals".

Possibly a more honest approach is to make "promises of a limited duration" only; here any betrayal would not be so intensely evil. Marcel simply asserts that "something in us protests . . . against this radical elimination of unconditional commitment."[108] Rather, taking risk seriously, we must say: "I shall continue to love you no matter what happens."[109] Marcel probably would have stated better what he meant as follows: "I shall continue to love you in the midst of all that happens."

c. Criticism. Possibly three things might be said of the effort to describe fidelity as presented in the William James Lectures. Three words or phrases epitomise them: "présentiel," "concrete us" and "risk". In each case they represent new and helpful terminology. They do not, however, introduce any new concepts not already discussed in Marcel's earlier writings. At most, they might be said to offer new emphases.

Marcel would like the term "présentiel" to refer to the "concrete context" which is "always necessary" to fidelity.[110] He really wants to replace the term "existential" with this term if he can hold on to the usual meaning of existential in so doing.[111] It seems to me that Marcel wants to have a term which refers to a gift,

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[108] EBHD, p.72. Here Marcel says that people like Bultmann have deprived man of the "sacred," that is to say the "unconditional" nature of existence. I wonder how well Marcel understands Bultmann?

[109] EBHD, p.74.

[110] EBHD, p.69.

[111] EBHD, p.69.

which is not a "given" in the strict philosophical sense, but which takes on the form of a gift when there is a faithful response of acceptance. This term is designed to refer to more than the duality of the giver and the receiver; it must refer to the mutual or unitary nature of the gift. It must allude to the mediated character of the response and of the initial giving.[112] Though he does not say it here in this chapter, it is only "secondary reflection" which can comprehend this "mystery".

The phrase "concrete us" refers to the intersubjective nature of fidelity. It is

> an intermediary kind of given between that which is accessible to just anybody on the one hand, and that which I alone am able to appreciate on the other . . . It is an open communion of selves, the kind which is formed around a work that is intimately loved but which we know will remain a closed book for an infinity of creatures.[113]

It is apparent that for Marcel the true ontological reality is not "I am," though our initial question may rightly be about that alleged identity. The reality is "we are". This convergence is the place of fidelity. It is the human reality that points beyond itself because its creativity is unaccountable in any other terms of reference.

The term "risk" refers to the dangerous nature of any commitment in this life because of the temptations to betrayal which are almost insurmountable. It refers to

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[112] Marcel in another place speaks of the "miracle of grace" that love can be returned for hatred which seems to show that there is a love mediated by a Thou which breaks the chain of mutual revenge. The volume, Fresh Hope for the World: Moral Re-Armament in Action, introduced and edited by Marcel, recounts several incidents where the chain of hatred has been broken; trans. Helen Hardinge (London: Longmans, 1960).

[113] EBHD, p.68.

something more, however, and this is the new stress in this lecture. He says:

> We should also say that love, far from merely requiring the acceptance of risk, demands it in a certain manner; love seems to be calling for a challenge to be tested because it is sure to emerge the conqueror.[114]

Is not Marcel saying that light could not exist without the contrasting darkness? Is he not saying, further, that there is something about a threat which, more than creating fidelity, actually allows it to thrive? So, it seems.

Modern scientists of human behaviour and relationships sometimes suggest that the promise of my future should be of a limited variety. A typical example is the advice of "trial marriage". Marcel admits that this is a conceivable alternative which seems to necessitate lesser evil if the promise is broken. But he cannot consider this seriously. He simply says that there is something in all of us, "exigence of transcendence," that desires to make a permanent promise to the one we love. Those who make only limited promises drop out the "unconditional," or what it seems Marcel should call the "fully conditioned," because he wants to accept all risks, or the "sacred" aspect of human love. Short-term promises contain a failure to recognise the "absolute" element present in commitment--especially commitment of a mutual character. Marcel simply posits this absolute element without doing much in the way of argument to elucidate it. It is the relation of love to the ontological mystery which gives it its absolute and sacred character.

We must postpone for a while asking about the adequacy of this presentation by Marcel. For now it is

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[114] EBHD, p.74; Supra, notes 77 in chapter on "Being and Having: The Phenomenological Foundation for Ethics".

sufficient to say that the main lines of Marcel's understanding of fidelity are followed up here.

E. Triad of Health

We must briefly examine the balanced aspects of my-self, the other and time which we previously observed in an unbalanced state of one form or another.

My-self. Only the healthy self may participate in moral life at a creative level. We have previously noted some of the symptoms common to sclerotic and malignant selves; what are the signs of a healthy moral self?

I should find personal meaning by "being-in-a-situation". The situation cannot be objectified on account it is "my situation". Take the concrete situation of a hotel in a "bad situation" because of a bad smell from a nearby tannery. If I hear of its closing, I may say it was because of the "bad situation". But that is merely to objectify. "My situation," like that of the hotel is not "self-contained," nor is it "porous," but rather it has an "aptness to be influenced" or a "readiness to take impressions". Such notions are difficult, and probably impossible to objectify. The sclerotic self (hard or rigid self) suffers from the same type of inner deficiency as does the malignant (soft or mushy self). A lack of "inner cohesion"--of being-in-a-situation.[115]

This raises the notion of the "available self" which we have referred to in an earlier chapter.[116] Unlike the

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[115] Supra, notes 51 and 53 in chapter on "Influential Participation".

[116] Cf. MBI, p.163; Supra, chapter on "Indefinable Self".

deficient selves we have analysed, the healthy self is "open" to the other person. Such a self has the capacity to form an intersubjective relation.

We might briefly summarise this self, as Marcel does in the first series of the Gifford Lectures, as a "new category".[117] It is nonobjective and yet retains an identity. This category is obviously hard to locate. We can describe it, however, as related to "the spiritual in general" and especially to "specific notes of the spirit".[118] It may be approached only by exploring the "concrete" level of life, which exploration includes a standby "alert" to the "intimate inner experience" of that life.

The Other. Creative fidelity--the fidelity of health--has a certain viewpoint toward "the other," also. It neither attempts to solidify him beyond all change nor does it allow him to be immersed in the sea of humanity. It assigns to "the other" the dignity of identity and meaning by responding as an"I" to a "thou". Rather than an "alongside" relation, it is a "with" relation which is established.[119] The "I" to "him" relation is "mere complicity" as where I share with an acquaintance where to get some "black market coffee".[120] On the other hand, "the feeling of community in effort and struggle" which people feel when enduring common stress together may be the kind of relation indicated by "creative fidelity". It is the ethical aspect of the "mutual" relation.

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[117] MBI, p.191.
[118] MBI, p.191.
[119] MBI, p.177; Supra, note 15 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".
[120] MBI, p.177; Supra, note 17 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".

"The other" is not to be understood in objective terms anymore than is "my-self". This "cement" is not between two separate terms, as such. Marcel illustrates this point by noticing that a table placed beside a chair makes no difference in either object because it is simply an external relationship. But intersubjective relations have inner significance; "My relationship with you makes a difference to both of us."[121] It is a relationship where a third person is something like an "intruder" who cannot understand the "shared secret".[122] Even a wife, says Marcel, feels like an outsider when her husband and an old comrade-in-arms meet again.[123]

Time. Creative fidelity occurs in time full of meaning. It is time in depth; profound time; fulfilled time. The Greeks called it Kairos rather than mere chronos. Replacing the sclerotic time of "the used, stale present" and malignant time of "mere novelty" is profound time that "pushes well ahead". Yet, this kind of time does not merely have a future orientation; it has past reference. The depth of time arises only when the future "harmonizes with the past".

Marcel wants to point to a kind of temporality in touch with the eternal. He finds Nietzsche's idea of "eternal return" to be "justifiable in principle," though it attempts to explain in terms of cause and effect a "mysterious linking of the future with the past" which

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[121] MBI, p.181.
[122] MBI, p.181.
[123] MBI, pp.193-194.

really goes beyond those terms of reference.[124] Marcel, describes this relation in his own words:

> In the dimension of depth the past and future firmly clasp hands; and . . . they do so in a region which . . . would have to be described as the absolute Here-and-Now.[125]

Noting how obscure this description remains, Marcel muses about several questions: Am I **not** an exile from my childhood? Do we not feel at times that the more the gap chronologically widens from childhood to adulthood, the closer we get to the return of childhood? What of our interest in ancient civilisations? Why is this interest so intense? Is man simply a "project"?[126]

In a lecture at the University of Kansas on the 8th March, 1965, Marcel spoke about "Man Before the Alleged Death of God". Referring to Nietzsche, he said in essence: Does Nietzsche's nihilism have to do with the aging process in man? Can aging convert itself into a source? I think it can be. We want to go back to the certainty of youth. This is a nostalgic wish. God has made man an historian. Man has the possibility of the reversal of the aging process. Maybe it is the element of hope which makes this possible; hope in relation to eternity which gives it meaning.[127]

F. Being

It will be obvious by now that one cannot understand Marcel's concern for ethics unless there is an acquaintance with his ontological reflections. It is this related concern

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[124] MBI, p.194.
[125] MBI, p.194.
[126] MBI, pp.195-196.
[127] From personal notes taken at the lecture.

which causes Marcel to speak of "the necessity of restoring to human experience its ontological weight".[128] One can readily see how such a concern could easily link up with problems of morality. This is even more evident in the following tentative definition: "What I have called the ontological weight of human experience is the love which it is able to bestow."[129]

Marcel recognises how difficult it is to give an accurate account of this ontological presence. The term "weight" speaks of pressure or density. But this must be distinguished from what is "residual" as in the case of an object. In 1933, Marcel said that being "resists analysis". In the William James Lectures he prefers to say:

> The irreducibility affirmed in that formula belongs to an experience on which critical analysis has not and cannot have any hold, short of substituting for the experience something else, something that it is not.[130]

Yet this puts us in danger of either psychologising or idealising this element. What we need, Marcel suggests, is a "syneidesis" which is a Greek term meaning "a kind of vision which brings things together and which, precisely for that reason, implies a prior development."[131]

Marcel illustrates this point by pointing to a musical "ensemble".[132] The picture is of an "orchestra performing a polyphonic work".[133] With the composer the

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[128] EBHD, p.74; Supra, note 57.
[129] EBHD, p.79. Underlining mine.
[130] EBHD, p.77.
[131] EBHD, p.75; Supra, note 3 in chapter on "Ontological Mystery".
[132] EBHD, p.78.
[133] EBHD, p.78.

whole precedes the parts and the performer must come to have the feeling of "ensemble". This feeling must not be thought of in terms of the part-whole idea of participation, however. We might rather say it something like this:

> What is disclosed to me is that this other person bears in himself a certain life and that he radiates this life like a light. And from the moment that I benefit from this attestation it may well be that I aspire to become a co-witness with this other being.[134]

It should be made plain how this applies to the subject of creative fidelity: This fidelity is not generated my "my-self" or emanated from "the other"; rather it is mediated to a response which is mutually creative. Such a position rises above time, commonly understood, to an in-depth attitude toward time; it recognises the "trans-historic depth of history".[135]

G. Example of the Family

Introduction. We must turn now to a specific example of creative fidelity as found in the ontological reality of the family. A key example of creative fidelity may be found in healthy family life. By a phenomenological description Marcel attempts to give specificality to the possibility of a relationship which is both permanent and open. The important essays? "The Mystery of the Family" and "Creative Vow as the Essence of Fatherhood,"[136] from 1942 and 1943, respectively, exhibit the dual concerns of anxiety over the decline in vital family life and desire to give concrete meaning to the notion of creative fidelity. A similar set

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[134] EBHD, p.79.

[135] MBI, p.218.

[136] Cf. HV, pp.68-124.

of concerns are to be found in his Gifford Lectures and in other later writings.

It is possible that the model of the family holds together what would tend to fall apart under other circumstances. By that we mean that the problem of individual and society in civics, the problem of the one and the many in philosophy and the problem of the true and the false in morals, all seem to be epitomised in the family relationship. As such, this pattern is more than just a chance choice; it is a central feature of life's meaning. Marcel says: "The family, inasmuch as it is the matrix of individuality, is really the meeting place of the vital element and the spiritual."[137] The enigmas of that quotation we hope will shortly become less apparent.

Sclerosis. It is possible for fidelity with the family to be sclerotic. This fault among parents causes us to refer to "a marriage in name only". When this occurs in the parent-child relation we say that the child is "tied to the mother's apron strings" or the father "thinks the son can do no wrong". This relation of absolute sway and absolute obedience in the latter relation is what appears to be a stultified position, allowing no opening for the crisp air of criticism, and, by the same token, void of any interacting life. Against such unhealthy relations Marcel enveighs.

Marcel is explicit in his opposition to "pure traditionalism".[138] I take him to mean that view in Roman Catholicism which sees sacramental significance in the

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[137] HV, p.95.

[138] HV, p.91.

marriage vows or the conception in Protestantism that there is something irreversably binding about the initial marriage vow itself. This is not the fidelity of which Marcel speaks. He says of fidelity: "We are too much inclined to consider it as a mere safeguard, an inward resolution which purposes simply to preserve the existing order."[139]

In the father-son relationship the position of "pure traditionalism" would be a "creditor-debtor" attitude. The child is regarded as wholly in the debt of the parent who gave his life. This, of course, assumes that life itself is believed to have intrinsic value. Marcel, to the contrary, regards life as "neither a blessing nor a curse in itself".[140] There is an inordinate pride in plain sight when "each one demands his due"[141] in this relationship.

This sterile approach may be seen from both sides of the father-son relation. The father may expect the son to enlarge his inheritance in a certain way, to do the same sort of work as he did, or, most reprehensibly, "he often requires of him to succeed where he himself has failed, to carry off the palm of victory which an unkind fate has refused him."[142] I suppose a similar attitude on the son's part might say to the father: "You brought me into the world; you therefore owe me a living."

In addition to what we have mentioned, Marcel sees further dangers in this sclerotic attitude. There is an element of "calculation" about it which is foreign to the

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[139] HV, p.90.
[140] HV, p.91.
[141] HV, p.91.
[142] HV, p.111.

faithful relation; for Marcel, any relationship subject only to "prudent calculations and methodical precautions,"[143] is futile. Further, from the point of view of moral theory, this "creditor-debtor" relation consists of treating "the other" as a means rather than an end; a person is sacrificed at the altar of a specific ambition.[144] Even further, there is something inaccurate about laying such a direct claim to ownership upon another. Just as it leads us astray to lay personal claim to the "having" of ourselves, it is out of order to claim that this child simply belongs to us. There are many other calls to which he must eventually respond. He must be brought up to see all of life accordingly.

The essence of the practice here examined is the intention to regard the person (father or son), or the vow made initially about him, as the cornerstone in the relational structure. The mistake is to fail to see that "the other" and the vow pass away in the flux of time unless reinstated by a new relational reality.

Malignancy. There are two respects, at least, in which the father-son relationship may open out into a situation without structure. The first respect is the commonly held view of "biological morality".[145] The second is the view of marriage as a "simple contract"[146]--a view which

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[143] HV, p.93.

[144] Cf. HV, p.116.

[145] HV, p.103.

[146] HV, p.85. There is a sense in which this should be treated as "sclerosis," in that it presupposes the fulfillment of definite ends as its only fulfillment. However, it falls in the "malignant" category because it has not sufficient grounding for structured growth. Marcel would say this ambivalence illustrates how the two false brands of fidelity untimately come together.

gives little or no thought to the welfare of the children such a union produces.

Only in a minor sense for Marcel may the sexual act be equated with fatherhood. For the male this incident may be as insignificant as a "gesture".[147] Admitting that conception often takes place in the midst of sobriety, the male partner must still be regarded as the passive agent of reproduction. This "asymmetry" precludes the proper establishment of a "biological morality".[148] There is "all the difference in the world" between procreation and fatherhood.

The "natural feelings" of a father for a son are insufficient for the establishment of a faithful relationship.[149] There may be quite "natural feelings" which cause a newly born son to stand as a compliment to the father's virility, which allow the mother to see the offspring as giving her new status, or which bring the parents together in the first place. How often are these "natural feelings" only passing fancies? Marcel says with pessimism:

> The truth is . . that men in general are so incapable of sincerity towards themselves and are still so dominated by prejudice--that is to say, by the idea of what it is fitting to feel--that they are not even conscious of the inadequacy of what they so ingenuously call their natural feelings.[150]

These sentiments are supported in the earlier essay where Marcel compares the family founded and erected "like a monument" with those who enter hastily and unadvisedly into

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[147] HV, p.102.
[148] HV, p.103.
[149] HV, p.109.
[150] HV, p.109.

marriage.[151] The latter group form "false marriages" of which there are many. Such a union is often based on the "satisfaction of an instinct," the "yielding to an impulse" or the "indulgence of a caprice".[152] On these terms, fidelity can only be of one kind--a makeshift kind epitomised in the words of a theatrical song: "I'm always true to you darling in my fashion; I'm always true to you darling in my way." What kind of relation could such a father establish with a son?

A more sophisticated version of malignancy is to be found in the idea of marriage as a "simple contract". Such a notion implies that there are specific terms to which both parties agree. It implies equally that termination of the contract may be announced by mutual consent. Many marriages which are not "common law" de jure are such de facto. But marriage usually means children; does this give the picture a new slant? Marcel claims that it does:

> They are no longer simply united by a reciprocal act which by common accord they can annul, but by the existence of a being for whom they are responsible and who has rights over them which cannot be set aside . . .[153]

Yet it is just these "rights" which the perpetrators of the notion of marriage as "simple contract" ignore or deny. It is hard to separate such a position from those who judge life's values "by the pleasures and conveniences it provides". Marcel adds:

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[151] HV, p.85.
[152] HV, p.85.
[153] HV, p.86.

> I am inclined to think that those people are becoming ever more numerous whose existence coagulates round a few satisfactions which from outside seem almost incredibly petty; the daily bridge party, the football match, some recreation connected either with love or food. They would not miss these pleasures for anything in the world.[154]

Marcel would agree that some secular people might look upon marriage as a mere contract but would certainly have a more mature outlook on life than the above quotation indicates. Such persons Marcel would regard as having fallen prey to a series of structures in our society that threaten the very foundation of the home. Among those threats he would list the following: One, "State control" supported by "sociological moralists".[155] This tends to standardise everyone irrespective of local custom. Two, the "sadness" and "boredom" produced in our large cities.[156] Three, the articulate presence of "revolutionary spirits" attempting to uproot all established institutions.[157] Four, the "amazing transformation in the material conditions of life" which has radically changed the "rhythm" of life.[158] Five, the press, "whose degraded character can never be denounced resolutely enough."[159] Six, the destruction of the family house by those whose ultimate aim is the overthrow of the family itself.[160]

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[154] HV, p.91.
[155] HV, p.74.
[156] HV, pp.81-83.
[157] HV, p.79.
[158] HV, p.80.
[159] HV, p.80.
[160] HV, p.77.

For Marcel, the family, and especially the relationship of father to son, cannot hope to survive if marriage does not transcend the notions of momentary pleasure and mere contract. The creative part of fidelity cannot be equated with procreation or with the arbitrary production of a contract.

Health. For Gabriel Marcel the two positions just described, though poles apart in one sense, come together in degeneracy and death for the family unit. Having diagnosed the deséase, Marcel is naturally anxious to propose a remedy. It must be said, however, that Marcel's proposals cannot be construed so much as "prescriptions" but rather as suggested modes of life which bring one more and more into harmony with the "Pondus Ontologicum" of our existence.

Marcel regards the family as "environne' de mystère".[161] This term must be understood in the technical sense which Marcel has given it. Initially, Marcel described this mystery as "something in which I find myself caught up, and whose essence is therefore not to be before me in its entirety."[162] In later writing he says in similar fashion: "The world of mystery is a place where I find myself committed, not commited in regard to some determinate and specialised aspect of myself, but committed as a whole man in so far as I achieve a unity . . ."[163] This unity is itself meta-problematic, or in other words, "a problem in the second degree; a problem regarding a problem."[164] Or we might say, the

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[161] HV, pp.69-71; cf. EBHD, p.85; also, cf. MBI, p.204.

[162] BH, p.100; Supra, note 6 of chapter on "Ontological Mystery" for later but similar definition.

[163] MAH, p.67.

[164] PM, p.17.

problem of my-self to myself is irresolvable in those terms.

What does this mystery mean in terms of the father-son relationship? It indicates that no one notion of that relationship suffices to give a foundation for interaction between them. I, as father, cannot regard myself simply as "master," "owner," "slave," "cause," "spectator," etc., in relation to my son. All these relationships are true" says Marcel, "which amounts to saying that each one of them taken by itself is false."[165] There is a unity here the sum of which is greater than the whole of its parts (which is simply another way of speaking about the "data encroaching on itself"). It is a multi-dimensional unity.

The family understood as mystery is a "giving" rather than a "given" unity.[166] Thus, we cannot say simply that the family exists. Marcel asserts: "It exists only on condition that it is apprehended not only as a value but as a living presence."[167] It would be analogous to say that a shepherd and a flock mutually affirm one another. The shepherd knows his sheep and the sheep know his voice.[168] Likewise, it is absurd for a man to regard himself as the father (except in the genetic sense) of a boy who does not recognise him. There must be a mediatory reality, suggested by the term "presence," at the centre of what we can legitimately call a family.[169]

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[165] HV, p.69.

[166] HV, p.69.

[167] HV, p.76.

[168] This recalls the Johannine doctrine of Christ as the "Good Shepherd" but it applies to more ordinary circumstances.

[169] Cf. PF, pp.32-33 for discussion of presence. Marcel says: "Fidelity is the active perpetuation of presence." This definition of the family as a "giving" rather than simply a "given" reality, an affirmed rather than simply a biological reality, makes the recent affair in Japan where two sets of parents exchanged boys several years of age because they had been mixed-up in hospital, seem not only incongruous but morally wrong.

Certainly a healthy organism is characterised by creative power. It has the nature of vitality and by that token is able to generate life outside itself. This creation in the self is not to be conceived as abiogenesis; it is not to be understood in the external sense as direct creation ex nihilio. Rather, the internal creation should be seen as the overflow of full vitality cascading over its own boundaries and indirectly giving life to those who actively receive its flow. To be more concrete, this may be conceived in terms of the vow which a father makes toward a son--a vow which creates out of the possibilities at hand. Marcel says: "The voeu créateur is no other than the fiat by which I decide to put all my energies at the service of this possibility which is already imposing itself upon me."[170]

Some negative and positive distinctions need to be made at this point. First, the son, is not affirmed on the basis of a certain present or destined worth. This we are unable to judge and if we attempt to do so it is not in the role of father that we do it, since paternal love as such makes no invidious comparisons. Second, this vow itself is a "perpetually renewed act of creation".[171] In negative terms, "we have good reason to assert that family relationships, like human matters in general, afford no consistency, no guarantee of solidity..."[172] We are at the level where either denial or voeu créateur are possible. Third, the way of creative fidelity does not necessarily involve us in

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[170] HV, p.118.
[171] HV, p.97.
[172] HV, p.98.

"special religious belief".[173] It is connected, however, with a certain reverence for the pervasive element in life that should be called "sacred". When the family is "reduced to an association with common interests,"[174] it loses its essential character. Marcel says:

> Only an affirmation which reaches far beyond all empirical and objectively discernible ways of living can gain for us a sense of life's fullness and, besides this, set the seal of eternity upon the perpetually renewed act of creation, that act by which the whole family reserves its being and grants to the soul, which it forms and guides, the fearful power of completing or, alas, of repudiating it.[175]

The father who takes the path of affirmation can best be named an "adventurer". Marcel quotes Péguy: "'The heads of families, those great adventures of the modern world.'"[176] It is crucial to see that this adventure is not so much like an inventor in pursuit of a definite end as it resembles an explorer searching the terrain of an uncharted land. A true father is a man who has accepted "risk" close to the heart of his existence.[177] He is Abraham "going out not knowing whether he is going." Marcel explicitly says: "Fatherhood nearly always presents

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[173] HV, p.92.

[174] HV, p.92.

[175] HV, pp.96-97; supra, note 171.

[176] Quoted in HV, p.87; also, cf. p.113. Original source unknown.

[177] HV, p.113. Here Marcel enveighs against premediated family planning as a sort of refusal to adventure. Yet Marcel's drama, Croissez et Multipliez seems to discredit those religious teachings that resign the wife to a reproductive machine. Marcel's most extended statement on contraception is found in "The Sacred in the Technological Age," op.cit., pp.29-37.

the character of a more or less hazardous conquest, which is achieved step by step over difficult country full of ambushes."[178] The true father is Homo Viator personified:

> Perhaps a stable order can only be established if man is acutely aware of his condition as a traveller, that is to say, if he perpetually reminds himself that he is required to cut himself a dangerous path across the unsteady blocks of a universe which has collapsed and seems to be crumbling in every direction.[179]

A Concluding Statement. We may conclude this section by giving summary description of the healthful condition which is creative fidelity. Possibly this can be stated in the vow which Marcel gives us sort of an intercessory prayer:

> I beg you to reveal yourself to me, to make your presence real for me, so that it will be possible for me to consecrate myself with a full understanding--since in my present state I can only see you through the clouds of uncertainty which encircle me. Moreover, I do not claim that you should attach any value on your own account to this consecration which can add nothing to what you are; but if you love me, if you consider me as your son, [father] it seems to me that, not for your own sake, of course, but for mine, you must want me to know and serve you, since, if it is not given to me to know and serve you, I am doomed to perdition.[180]

It seems that Marcel's notion of fidelity might better be called "recreative fidelity" rather than "creative". Marcel wants to speak of a creation which is elicited from me and takes the form of a humble response.

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[178] HV, p.110.

[179] HV, p.153. Stated in 1943, during the war. I doubt if Marcel would care to change a word of it now, a quarter of a century later.

[180] HV, pp.117-118.

This mutuality or circularity of fidelity between father and son perpetually recreates the vitality and spirituality of each other. The creation which takes place in the inner life of the father cannot be separated from, nor can it be viewed as directly related to--in cause and effect fashion--the receptive response of the other. Here in this relationship the polarities of passivity and activity are recognised but are transcended in the "presence" of a new relationship which may only be understood as a "mystery".

The fact that the father affirms the son before he can respond in any way does not hinder this concept. For Marcel sees the mutual mediation of father and son as pointing towards and presupposing a prior mediation which may only be conceived in terms of the eternal.[181] The presence of helplessness and innocence indicates the shape of the "sacred" impinging upon this situation. It is not irrelevant that even the most cruel are hard-pressed to treat a helpless infant unkindly. Indeed, the prevalence of cruelty toward children in Western urban life points towards the loss of "natural affection" in "le monde cassé".

It is necessary to ask just what exactly is "creative" about the fidelity Marcel seeks to elucidate. It should be clear that there is no direct creation of anything in myself or the other. That the creation is reciprocal has led me to call it "recreative" rather than simply creative. It seems that what is created is a concrete us. This is done by a process somewhere in between creation ex nihilo and formation by the manufacturing process. This may not be equated with the arbitrary nature of the "creative ethics" elaborated by Nikolas Berdyaev. He is certainly pointing

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[181] Cf. HV, pp.122-124.

to a fidelity that involves a nonpassive reception of the other.

Is this creative fidelity only formally, not practically, different than the rule morality? Marcel admits it may have no outward difference. Yet there are vital differences. First, Marcel would hold that simple rule morality cannot stand on its own for long, but will break-up without its becoming of a "supra-personal" character. Second, he would hold that inward intention is every bit as important as outward act. This view seems to coincide with Kierkegaard's teaching. Third, Marcel deals with this question and suggests that "in spite of appearances" the creative vow is different in essence than the "inertia" or "pride" of sclerotic morality. Again, the artist becomes an exemplar:

> The voeu only takes shape after the artist has, as it were, been possessed by some form of reality which is revealed less by sight than by a sort of inward touch.[182]

This reality appears to be both reliant on and independent of his will.

> The voeu créateur is no other than the fiat by which I decide to put all my energies at the service of this possibility which is already imposing itself upon me, but only upon me, as a reality, so that I may transform it into a reality for all, that is to say into an established work.

The voeu is both engagement and decision but "is not simply within my own being, something transcendent is involved, however indistinct my consciousness of it may yet be."[183] In other words, this act cannot be separated from a certain affirmative attitude toward life. It seems to me that Marcel

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[182] HV, p.118.

[183] HV, p.118.

is saying that rule morality is only a shallow approximation of the true ethic. Yet it cannot be but admitted that outwardly it has more seeming relation than does malignant action. Yet rule morality cannot stand long by itself since it is based only on its own lethargy or pride.

But what of the fact that the I-thou relation cannot be perpetuated at all times in all places? This Marcel does not readily admit. He contends that the "concrete us" is a permanent element lasting through time and space. Yet this permancy cannot be separated from the response of the human participants. It seems that Marcel is involved in an impasse here. This may only be solved by talking in terms of "presence" of a new relationship: A presence which points toward and presupposes the eternal in the midst of the changing. Would he not recommend a return to the hospital to visit the dying one you promised to see again on the basis that it seems to be an act in accord with the overshadowing permanence? Would he agree with the advice a counselor once gave when he heard his patient say he no longer loved his wife? "Court her again"! Is this not the best possible alternative in spite of Marcel's denouncing it as "dishonest" and "the most dispicable form of pride"? Marcel may in practice have to allow for this, though he does not appear to do so. After all, he would admit that all are involved in guilt, except for the limiting case of the saint. We should note that there is no "risk" in rule morality. This is another aspect of its lack of creativity. But this remains somewhat of a formal difference, unless viewed from inside rather than outside the relationship.

Certainly what Marcel enveighs against is "fidelity in name only", as much as he denounces what would traditionally be called infidelity.

SECTION TWO

RECREATIVE TESTIMONY

"Man by his very essence is a witness who tests things by receiving them into himself in virtue of a personal act which engages him in his entire being."

Gabriel Marcel

CHAPTER XII

RECREATIVE TESTIMONY IN A BROKEN WORLD

A. Preliminary Remarks

The two World Wars which swept across France impressed an indelible, grey mark on the life and thought of the jovial Parisian from the rue de Tournon.[1] Yet the atmosphere of gloom which is the minor key in Marcel's reflections does not merely find its source in these relatively ephemeral apocalyptic events. The foreboding cloud which overshadows his philosophy and theatre, finds its source deeper in the past. Marcel believes that since the eighteenth century man has been increasingly problematic for himself.[2]

The alienated state of Western man may be regarded as the result of man as problem-solver achieving victory over man in confrontation with mystery. The man of having has conquered the man of being. More precisely, the having of man has confounded the being of man. The tragedy of this alleged victory, as Marcel views it, is that the master has

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[1] Though Sidney Cain says, op.cit., p.7, Marcel's "wit . . . bubbling good humour and joie de vivre" remain intact.

[2] PM, pp.27-28.

as often as not become the slave. The victor has been victimised.

If recreative fidelity is the answer to estrangement on the intimate level of social relations, recreative testimony is the parallel remedy on the more formal levels of human relations.[3] Certainly the public and the private are not so clearly defined in modern life; nor are they so facilely segregated in Marcel's philosophy. Indeed, the approach to social problems retains the same characteristics found in the approach to family difficulties. Whether this is possible is subject to further examination.

B. Broken World

The wars of this century are dreadful symbols of alienation. Both World Wars influenced Marcel in a decisive manner. World War II he describes as that "spectacle of widespread ruin" and that "universal sacrilege" which rose to meet our gaze.[4]

This experience of war has caused Marcel to be less than sanguine about the future. He closed the Gifford Lectures by allowing for the "extreme probability that we are heading for catastrophes even more terrible."[5] Topical remarks at the close of the William James Lectures are scarcely more reassured.[6]

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[3]This is my own conclusion. Marcel never makes this distinction but it would appear to be implicit in essays such as "Testimony and Existentialism" in PE, p.67-76.

[4]HV, p.12.

[5]MBII, p.166.

[6]EBHD, p.168. It would seem, though the remarks are not explicit, that Marcel refers here to Soviet-American confrontation. This postscript may have been written in the light of the "Cuban Affair".

It would be wrong to associate Marcel with a philosophy of pessimism.[7] Yet it is equally clear that Marcel has for some time viewed the horizon with a certain lack of confidence. The wars, of which we have spoken, ought to be seen as the concrete evidence rather than the source of man's basic alienation. Since Marcel does not emphasize the mere historical nature of this split in man, he is suspicious of those who give what seem to be over simple answers to the situation. He warns that the philosopher is unable to bring in from the outside such a contrived remedy as "the supernatural".[8] Equally unable to cope with the tragedy of our times is the myth of inevitable progress.[9]

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[7]Cf. MAH, pp.159-171, where he disavows pessimism and optimism as ideologies to be avoided. We shall see that Marcel defines hope as being outside both of these human convictions.

[8]EBHD, p.92.

[9]Cf. PM, pp.23-24, where Marcel states that the dialectical materialism which cast religion aside as the "opiate of the masses" is itself a "refuge" which by the abstraction of enabling us to "distribute human beings into two categories, that of the oppressors and that of the oppressed" falsely freed half of us from guilt. It should claim our attention to notice the debate which Marcel once carried on with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who has now, following his death, become influential in certain circles. Leslie Dewart, author of The Future of Belief, writes in a rather cursory introduction to the English translation of L'Homme problématique, that Marcel's analysis of the movement of history and his study of "uneasiness" indicate that Marcel's "supposed incompatibility" with de Chardin may be "wholly illusory"; cf. PM, pp.10-11. I have not found Marcel to refer to de Chardin by name except possibly he means to make a reference to him in MAH, p.198, when he speaks of "a famous French paleontologist". Charles E. Raven in Teilhard de Chardin: Scientist and Seer (London: Collins, 1962), p.103, states that in the late 1940's Marcel and de Chardin staged a "debate, indeed a duel, over their sharply contrasted views of Christianity."

In Claude Cuénot's Teilhard de Chardin: A Biographical Study (London: Burns and Oates, 1965), pp.251-253, one

As an alternative to these proposals, Marcel conceives of the possibility that "we are witnessing a deterioration of the human species and of the existential modalities that have characterised it in what are called civilised periods."[10]

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discovers a more explicit version of this debate on the problem of progress and futurity in relation to faith: Cuénot reports as follows: At a meeting on 21st January, 1947, a discussion on "Science and Consciousness" took place between de Chardin and Marcel in the presence of Père Dubarle, O.P. The precise subject was "Law of Complexity and Consciousness". Part of the discussion went as follows: First, de Chardin asked "To what degree does the material organization of humanity lead man to the point of spiritual maturation?" Marcel responded: "My personal answer is very skeptical. I am perfectly aware of your insistence on the collective nature of this integrating consciousness, but I ask myself why such a consciousness should necessarily produce a spiritual value. By 'spiritual' I understand a reference to certain values which are very precise. Let me take the example of the doctors at Dachau. On this level, can one be optimistic? What is the integrating consciousness of these scientists worth? I see nothing hominizing here." To this statement by Marcel, de Chardin responded to the effect that the attempt to penetrate the "secrets of matter" is itself a spiritual enterprise and the more spiritual an action the more easily the supernatural may complete it. Marcel's response to that was unlike him in its assertiveness. He exploded: "An anti-Christian concept which leads us back to Promethian man!" Said de Chardin in essence: Promethian man is simply one who refuses to transcend his deeds. In that state he is confronted by his "total death". Cuénot reports that from there on Marcel took up the cudgels against technique and collectivism, while de Chardin argued that technique was essentially spiritual. He said that the Dauchau doctors only illustrate inversely the integrating intention. At the end, says Cuénot, there was little agreement between these two strong thinkers. On the basis of these reports and our study of Marcel, it would appear that Dewart is well off the mark.

[10] MBI, p.183.

Does Marcel believe "the broken world" is a phenomenon of recent centuries or the perpetual human condition? Marcel, in line with a long standing Christian tradition, is convinced that mankind suffers from a perennial desease. It is this permanent rapture in the world which consigns man to the role of *homo viator*, even at his best. Thus, "*le monde casse*'" is not to be viewed as the result of a crushing blow in the history of man.[11]

Modern man has attempted to evade this understanding of his existence. Marcel regards Pascal as an exception in the seventeenth century who recognised the misery at the heart of man's glory.[12] In the eighteenth century optimism kept such anxious thoughts at bay, though Rousseau characterised the times as "out of joint".[13] This same exaltation of man's possibilities continued in the nineteenth century through the rise of Marxist optimism.[14] Such optimism continues to flourish in our century in spite of events. The twin emotions of fear and desire, which abstract from man's ability to reflect and imagine, are accountable for this optimism.

Yet Marcel believes that there is something new before us. The new element is this: "Man has become for himself a question without an answer."[15] This new stage in man's

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[11] MBI, p.34. Here Marcel seems to understand "the Fall" in nonliteral terms; "The Fall" is in some sense coincident with man's creation or his awakening out of prehistorical innocence.

[12] MBI, pp.34-35.

[13] MBI, p.35.

[14] MBI, pp.35-36.

[15] PM, p.29.

history Marcel does not celebrate, yet it is clear that Marcel refuses to espouse a neo-romantic plea for a past era. I quote:

> It is not in our power, it is no longer even among our possibilities, to retrograde towards the stage of history in which man could appear to himself as an evident given.[16]

It would seem that Marcel seeks to expose certain values which are just as trans-historical as the split in man's world but which have been hidden by the emergence of man in serious doubt about his own essence.

C. Technology and Beaurocratic Life

According to Marcel, beaurocratic life and the technological revolution may be symptoms of "le monde casse".[17] Take technique for example. Marcel defines it as "a specific instance of our general application of our gift of reason to reality."[18] It is a specific instance of the "having mentality". This "closed having" is not to be condemned if it remains this side of the daemonic. Marcel clearly states that "To condemn technical progress is . . .

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[16] PM, p.52. Dewart thinks wrongly that this statement puts Marcel in league with de Chardin; Supra, note 9. Marcel explicitly refuses to accept that evolution equals progress. "Experience and history" give a "categorical refutation" to such simplistic solutions and, anyway, it is necessary to evaluate each new phenomenon to discover just where in it signifies progress; Cf. PM, pp.38-39.

[17] Beaurocracy and technocracy seem usually to go together, though not inevitably; EBHD, p.162.

[18] MAH, p.12; cf. "The Sacred in a Technological Age," op.cit., p.28 where the definition is broadened: "A technique is a specialized and rationally elaborated practical knowledge, a procedural savoir faire which is at once perfectible and transmissible."

to utter words empty of meaning."[19]

The real threat appears when the tendency of technique to regard all of life as subject to this mode of "closed having" becomes actualised in practice. This may well be called technocracy; this is the technique become an idol. Keen, commenting on Marcel's position puts it aptly: "The real danger to the human spirit lies in the radicalisation of the technological mentality."[20] In these observations Marcel joins forces with other contemporary writers of an existentialist bent to warn that modern man is in danger of falling into the realm of the infra-human or the in-human.

Marcel has turned our attention to a dramatic illustration of the convergence of beaurocratic and technocratic life. In The Twenty-Fifth Hour, a novel by the Rumanian author, C. Virgil Gheorgiu, such a scene unfolds. A displaced person who has been falsely denounced to the Nazis as a Jew, cannot prove otherwise and is placed in a concentration camp as a consequence. But because of his appearance he is taken from the camp and assigned to an S.S. battalion as a "pure Aryan". He escapes and joins the American forces, but when his Rumanian origins are discovered, he is classified as an enemy. Here, in a fashion recalling George Orwell's novel, Nineteen Eighty-Four, the technocratic

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[19] MAH, p.62. He even at one point in MAH, says that technique is "good in itself" but I seriously question whether he would care to maintain that position. In PM, p.53 he said: "Technology is something which he man is obliged now to bear, to assume under pain of denying himself. It is not a burden which he can set down in order to lighten his step." This is a later statement which shows that Marcel would not regard technique as intrinsically good.

[20] Op.cit., p.11. Marcel makes an "absolute distinction in theory between technocracy and the proper sphere of techniques," MAH, p.195.

method has blended with the beaurocratic mentality to enforce a personal hell on a free person. Since this is a case Marcel speaks of often, I quote him at length:

> The point, here, is not only to recognize that the human, all too human, powers that make up my life no longer sustain any practical distinction between myself and the abstract individual all of whose 'particulars' can be contained on the few sheets of an official dossier, but that this strange reduction of the personality to an official identity must have an inevitable repercussion on the way I am forced to grasp myself . . . What does a creature who is thus pushed about from pillar to post, ticketed, docketed, labelled, become, for himself and in himself? One might almost speak in this connection of a social nudity, a social stripping.[21]

Beaurocratic life would seem to be a more direct frontal attack on personal identity. Like Franz Kafka, Marcel finds a "sinister, metaphysical significance" in the "form-filling game" which we are called upon to "play" more and more often. What precisely is the objectionable facet of this activity? Marcel replies: "I have not a consciousness of <u>being</u> the person who is entered under the various headings."[22] But why do many people feel no adversity to form-filling? Marcel is equally clear on this point: They have "a total deficiency as far as the faculty of creation is concerned."[23] In the usage common to us by now, they have completely succumbed to the world of having. Marcel's humour surfaces when he speculates about what would happen if in reply to the beaurocratic question, 'So you are Mr. So-and-So?' I replied, 'Certainly not.' The man behind the desk would either think me insane or a liar.

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[21] MBI, pp.29-30.

[22] MBI, p.84.

[23] MBI, p.85.

Such is the beaurocratic mentality that he would never suspect that 'are', a form of 'to be', is the real issue. Having has blinded his apprehension of being.[24]

D. Marcel: Witness or Reactionary?

This explicit opposition to the mechanical traits of modern society has been voiced by others and equally as well by a few.[25] The question which arises, however, is whether or not Marcel is able to come to grips with the virtues as well as the problems of modern technology. It is not altogether certain that he has moved beyond the range of opposition to the level of constructive discourse. It is one thing to describe "le monde cassé" and another to suggest a remedy. Even more damning is the possibility that a remedy has been suggested for an evil that exists only for a few thinkers out of joint with the age they survey.

The most acute criticism against Marcel is that he levels a barrage of abuse against the technological trend in modern society without sufficient recognition of the worthwhile results it has achieved and without offering sufficient answers to the problems he deplores. Reinhardt suggests that "Marcel sometimes seems to forget" that there is a "middle term" between "individualistic anarchy and authoritarian collectivism".[26] Marcel, himself, in what seems to me a weak moment, admitted that he has settled for a philosophy of the intimate relationships of love, friendship and fidelity, leaving aside the workings of the social institutions

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[24] MBI, p.85.

[25] We might refer to writers such as T.S.Eliot and W.H.Auden.

[26] The Existentialist Revolt (New York: Frederick Unger, 1960), p.225.

of man.[27]

It is probably true that Marcel, the social critic, has been less successful than Marcel, the essayest on intimate society. Marcel has certainly explained the re-creativity of fidelity in greater depth than the notion of recreative testimony. In a perceptive comparison of Marcel and Jacques Maritain, H. Stewart Hughes referred to Marcel as less advanced in social philosophy though he was more permissive in matters of faith.[28] Ewijk confides that Jaspers' philosophy contains what Marcel's reflections lack in any explicit fashion: "A positive reflection on the meaning of technical science."[29]

With this general negative criticism of Marcel's social effectiveness I must agree. It is not simply that he has failed to write a definitive study of man in all his relationships; it is that he has been unable to equal the specific criticisms he has made against modern society with equally specific remedial suggestions. Gallagher rightly regards this as Marcel's most glaring weakness.[30] How to explain this deficiency remains a difficult problem. It may indeed be a tempermental incompatibility with the world of science and technology.[31] Whatever it is, it has been a primary factor in diminishing the impact of Marcel's thought

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[27] Cf. "Foreword" to Gallagher, op.cit., p.xv.

[28] "Marcel, Maritain and the Secular World," The American Scholar, Vol.XXXV (Autumn, 1966), p.746. He goes so far as to speak of the "anguished, almost hysterical character of Marcel's social writings," p.746. This is an exaggeration.

[29] Gabriel Marcel: An Introduction (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1965), p.84.

[30] Op.cit., pp.150-151. I will soon qualify this.

[31] Ibid., p.151.

among scientifically orientated philosophers. Anglo-Americans have applied diminished attention to Marcel for this reason, though often similar topics in philosophy are discussed.[32] It is without doubt the lack of attention to scientifically influenced forms of communication which has hindered the dissemination of Marcel's message.

But this negative criticism deserves qualification. One of the central concerns of this study, especially in the section on consideration, is to indicate that Marcel's thought may provide a basis for movement toward an understanding of man in a technological age. Such an understanding should enable us to judge with increased accuracy the ethical status of technological man. The criterion for personal morality of whether a man is transcending or degrading himself should prove to be an approximate canon we could apply to society at large.

One of the finest analyses Marcel has contributed to philosophy appears precisely in this arena where we have discovered his vulnerability. It may be described as the effort to separate the denigrating influence of techniques (daemonic having) from the techniques with which we may, with profit, co-exist (closed having). This must be explained in greater detail than Marcel gives it.

It should be clear from previous analysis that Marcel does not intend to make an absolute distinction

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[32]For example, the modern classic, The Concept of Mind, by Gilbert Ryle, covers much of the same territory as Marcel's Metaphysical Journal, especially on mind-body relations, and the conclusions reached are not altogether dissimilar.

between being and having.[33] There are large areas of life where technique must be allowed to operate.[34] The design and production of motor cars must be viewed as a region where technique holds a leading role; yet when considerations of cost, production schedule, place in the competitive market, etc., obscure the element of design safety, then the techniques have taken on a grim visage. Likewise, a hospital without technical efficiency on all levels of operation would soon disintegrate into a chamber of horrors; but what it is erroneous to believe, according to Marcel, is that the perfection of the medical technique is the single road to the recovery and health of the patient. When we come to the area of the ministry to the human spirit in the light of man's religious consciousness, technique is still not without its place; indeed, its crucial place. In all these areas being and having come together at some point. It has been Marcel's concern to show that when this convergence takes place the exigence for being must take primacy or the element of daemonic having soon predominates.

Marcel has done well to warn against the unrestrained encroachment of technique. He has done this by showing that in all areas of human endeavor, as we have just indicated,

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[33]The two possible exceptions are the extremes of the daemonic and the saintly, and even here it is problematic whether or not Marcel would admit point-blank that even these limit cases constitute an absolute transformation. At times, for example, Marcel seems to regard the saint as exempt from the vicissitudes common to normal men, e.g., the absence of "unease". But Marcel rightly sees that even the "humility" of the saint is to some extent a "certain uneasiness about oneself". Here we see again the mundane impossibility of finally separating being from the category of having which is both its threat and its promise; cf. PM, p.140.

[34]Cf. Marcel's Foreword to Gallagher, op.cit., p.xv.

technique is always in danger of contributing a blow against the dignity of man. Also, he has achieved this by indicating that there are certain questions which man asks which are less susceptible to the technical solution. Again an example will be of assistance. The question, "What is the meaning of human history?" is not an unexamined problem. The question has been answered by the philosophers of history on a problematic level. But does it not defie such an approach? The questioner is himself involved in human history; it is to some extent something he is, not merely something he may examine at a distance. Any philosophy of history which attempts to give its total meaning deprives that history of its essential freedom to the extent that the conclusions take on a dogmatic character. Speaking in more personal terms, Marcel has stated this point:

> My history is not transparent to me. It is only my history in so far as it is not transparent to me. In this sense it cannot become part of my system and perhaps it even breaks up my system.[35]

The question is meta-technical and requires an answer in kind. It is to Marcel's great credit that he has shown that a certain kind of question, which appears to be universally asked, is not open to the management of technique, i.e., could not be programmed in a computer.

But Marcel's weakness, as we have indicated above, appears in that he has given insufficient attention to the values which may accrue when closed having is held in tension with the concern for the recreation of being. Nor has Marcel been unaware of this criticism. He has responded with a characteristic flexibility remarkable for his advancing years. What he has written has done much to dispel

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[35] BH, p.129. Supra, note 18 in chapter on "Recreative Fidelity".

the full impact of the criticism, though it has not yet altered the shape of the image he has received on this matter. It would be inappropriate if this study failed to come to grips with this advance in Marcel's thought.

In the first place, Marcel has commented on the distinction to be made between the creator and the user of a technique.[36] This was altered in later reflections to the effect that even the "perfecting" process of the technique could be considered on the creative side of the issue.[37] In this alteration, Marcel enables the technician to come under the umbrella of the "creative spirit," at least to some extent. This identification of the technician as "perfector" or repairer of a technique is in line with Marcel's increased willingness to admit the usefulness of many forms of closed having. There is still no relief for the assembly-line worker in such a system; he seems inevitably to fall into bondage to the machine. The technician escapes the bondage of having by the fact that he participates in the creative process, if only on a secondary level. Perhaps the redemption of the assembly-line worker consists in the development of a society where his "being" extends far beyond his mere "having" of a particular job and of the concrete relation with others in a useful social task.

In the second place, by way of response, in the criticism of his thought Marcel has shown why he has been unable from his position to provide a "remedy" for the split caused by increasing technicalisation. This point he makes

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[36] MBI, p.124. At this point Marcel could find little use for the technician in a society which recognised that life was more than having.

[37] EBHD, p.160.

in explicit fashion:

> If I prefer not to speak of a remedy it is because by doing so one would risk slipping into a sort of pragmatism of the sacred, which would constitute an offense against the very thing one intended to restore.[38]

If technology is a threat to man's being, as Marcel claims it may be, it is clear that one would only complicate the matter by introducing a formula which is supposedly designed to solve the problem of man's depersonalisation. This would serve only to create a new set of problems not necessarily any easier to solve than the former set. The need is to transform the level of having from derivative to fundamental, from merely passive to creative. This means that there must be a "conversion" from the realm of the technical to the level of creative spirit; a transformation, in our current terms, from having and towards being. This involves a witness in the midst of events by persons and groups that faithfully move toward fulfillment.

It is impossible for this movement to establish a rule-like criterion for the promotion of these goals. Marcel regards it as an "absurd" assumption that one can provide an answer in the "nature of a formula" for our broken world. It is foolish, of course, to claim that societal improvements cannot be influenced by legislation. Marcel's recognition of the necessary code indicates that he knows this fact.[39] For example, in modern high-pressure selling techniques it is common for salesmen to be advised to refrain from applying optimum pressure for the sake of the immediate sale, at the expense of return business. Here

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[38] EBHD, p.167; supra, note 30.

[39] Supra, note 74 in chapter on "Inadequacy of Rules".

we see that the technique has been refined so that it has a built-in pressure valve intrinsic to its structure. It is at this point that leaders of modern technical science today sometimes insist that a true definition of technique includes concern for the human factor. But what Marcel would insist upon, in opposition to de Chardin, is that this hominising tendency grows merely out of the pursuit of the refined technique.[40] Marcel would insist further that if the concern for "being" is unrelated to values outside the external technique, it will eventually disintegrate from lack of ontological nourishment. He would argue too that concern for the human factor soon becomes a sham façade if the "concern" is simply engendered by technical consideration; such a state of affairs causes the growth of a cynical society.

But this position needs to be observed for just a moment longer. Is it not possible to argue that the Marxist forecast of revolution in industrialised Western countries has gone astray, in part, because of the fashion in which management has learned to share its profits with those who create them. There is no necessity to argue here how this has come about; it is simply an example of the fact that it is possible for beaurocratic institutions engaged in the development of production techniques to achieve certain material benefits for all concerned.[41] It would appear at first glance that here is an example where

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[40] Supra, note 9.

[41] I would refer the reader to a company such as American Motors in the United States which has managed to survive and progress in a giant-killing industry, in part, by the development of a profit sharing plan for its workers all the way down the line.

interest in technical progress coincides with the improvement of material welfare. It would seem that this example presents a serious flaw in Marcel's argument. But on the basis of this study, I believe Marcel might answer as follows: It is not necessary to assume that all technical progress will always coincide with human fulfillment. Further, the image of man is vital here. If man "lives by bread alone" the argument is irrefutable. But what happens to the man who realises that his financial advance is due to the fact that he has become an increasingly effective functional unit of production?[42]

Marcel's indictment of the formal remedy to the malaise of technological society appears to be well founded. It cannot be claimed that he has given sufficient credit to the beneficial aspects of technique in modern society. (This is primarily because the role of social critic, by definition, contains a certain imbalance.[43]) But it may justly be calimed that his response to those who accuse him of failing to offer a remedy has cut the heart out of this criticism. It would be inconsistent for Marcel, in the light of his whole thought, to suggest that a formal remedy could be anything more than a temporary expediency or a starting point to lead understanding from the level of having toward being. Marcel's philosophy is intended as a recreative testimony to point modern man in the direction of fulfillment.

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[42] Cf. PM, p.137.

[43] Marcel explicitly denies the title of "prophet," MAH, p.170, but there is not any doubt that it fits in many ways.

E. Knowledge and Mystery

Kenneth Gallagher does provide a third point which may be viewed as a possible extension to Marcel's understanding. The suggestion itself is coherent with Marcel's projection of being and having and it is harmonious with Marcel's increased willingness to recognise the extensive usefulness of technology in its proper sphere. Gallagher asks if, "In a self orientated to the mystery of being, could not problematic knowledge actually contribute to his awareness of presence?"[44] He answers himself: "An increase in objectification may be the prelude to a heightened awareness of subjectivity."[45] This student of Marcel illustrates the point as follows:

> One who believes that the sun is a fiery chariot is a less apt candidate for the philosophical intuition of being than the one who treats it as a gaseous sphere, and has carefully ascertained its mean distance from the earth.[46]

There is much plausibility about Gallagher's position. Certainly an apologist for Marcel would like to affirm this extension in order to make Marcel's position more amenable to contemporary thought. It must be admitted, as Gallagher does, that Marcel himself does not exactly make this point. Yet, in as much as Marcel has seen the need for primary reflection as the possibility of secondary reflection, the point is strictly compatible.[47] Also, to the degree that

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[44] Op.cit., p.155.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., p.154.
[47] Supra, chapter on "Secondary Reflection".

Marcel has emphasized risk as the possibility of recreative fidelity and testimony, to that very extent he has anticipated the point Gallagher here makes. But having said that, there are some serious reservations that must be entered.

Gallagher's own statements seem highly dubious in the light of an important paragraph in Problematic Man, which is not at all atypical of Marcel's work:

> We have merely to acknowledge that if we know more and more things about man, we are perhaps less and less clear regarding his essence: I would even be disposed to wonder whether this profusion of practical knowledge is not after all blinding . . . The temptation will be strong under these conditions to limit oneself to a positivism which will declare not merely insoluble, but even void of meaning those fundamental questions regarding the essence or destiny of man to which science can provide no answer.[48]

Even if Marcel does admit that analytical knowledge may increase the capacity of man for progress in a technical sense, he is far from the admission that this progress increases his capacity to witness to ontological mystery. It is doubtful whether Marcel would admit that the peasant is a "less apt candidate for the philosophical intuition of being "than the graduate student in science. This position is based on the "having" character of scientific knowledge, which this tends to take on an obsessive character. As a corollary, it would seem that Marcel regards the power to witness to the ontological weight in personal existence to be of a more primitive, universal character than Gallagher's strictures would suggest.

Up to this point, however, Gallagher's thrust has had the beneficial effect of pointing out something essential

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[48] PM, p.62 . Underlining mine.

to Marcel's position: Technical progress is not necessarily contradictory to apprehension of mystery. It is when Gallagher pushes on to establish that metaphysical knowledge is not precisely outside of objectified knowledge that the problem arises.[49] I think this is what Marcel would not and should not admit. It has been explained that being cannot expand apart from having, but this is not to say that having exists "inside" being. While technique may not necessarily be antithetical to being, this is not to say that it always, or even usually, contributes to the growth of being. For example, Marcel specifically denies that the goal of world unity is necessarily any closer now that modern technical achievements have made world-wide congresses and conferences possible; unity is a profound value which the linear "elimination of distance" does not necessarily influence for the sake of improvement.[50]

Gallagher's language itself is confusing at this point. He follows up the denial that metaphysical knowledge is "precisely outside" objectified knowledge, with the explanation that "they are dual aspects of a coming to knowledge which is one integral process." This may be good neo-Thomism but it only serves to "muddy the waters" in any effort to extend Marcel's thought. It is correct to affirm that science ontology are not necessary enemies. But to claim that they are Siamese twins or "dual aspects of . . . one process" is quite another claim. Marcel could not consistently regard this as a fruitful extension of his own thought. It would appear that Gallagher's position is that of a Roman Catholic commentator endeavoring to bring

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[49] Loc.cit. Supra, note 13 in chapter on "Philosophical Method".
[50] MAH, p.163.

Marcel within the intellectual confines of traditional canons.[51]

There would appear to be at least three parts of this intricate issue which demand final clarification. First, the distinction between closed and open having needs emphasis. According to Marcel, closed having or "objectified knowledge" does not *in itself* have an element of mystery.[52] This may be a point worthy of debate, but it hardly seems dubitable as an exposition of Marcel's position.[53] This does not deny coincidental convergence of being and having. Again, in this world, being never leaves having totally behind. But the scientist *qua* scientist does not ask the ethical question. It is true that his task may bring him to the edge of ethical decision or it may equally be true that his "being" can only abstractly ignore the job which he "has," but the fact remains that it is only as man *qua* man that he may recreate his being in ethical decision. It may be that he is better equipped to answer certain moral questions, i.e. in medical ethics, but the real point is this: *It is only to the extent that his job as a scientist has been incorporated into his vocation as a man in the world which he is able to choose wisely. Every man has this potential at his own level of life.*

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[51] Gallagher, *op.cit.*, pp.133-157. These pages clearly show the heavy Catholicity of this crucial, evaluative chapter.

[52] Gallagher says precisely the opposite, claiming it to be an extension of Marcel's thought; *Ibid.*, p.156.

[53] Hazelton, *op.cit.*, p.158 says that mystery is not to be understood as the limit situation of the problematic. This is the Kantian position taken up by Jaspers. Rather, "Mystery . . . denotes that zone or dimension in which the thinker must take up a radically new stance in respect to being." Hazelton appears to be correct here.

It will be clear now that if the distinction between being and having is to be overcome, it will not be by enclosing being within having, but by a "conversion" whereby having is gathered up into being. This is the second point for clarification. Marcel's notion of transformation or recreativity must receive emphasis. Though Gallagher sees this notion as the crucial interpretative element in Marcel's philosophy, he does not apply it properly in his evaluative remarks.[54] It is this "conversion" which makes possible the distinction between closed and open having, between having and that which is toward being in its fulness. Either a difference does or does not exist here. It is Marcel's conviction that there is a difference, but it is a difference closed to the scientific method. In other words, the apprehension of whether the person or a culture is moving in a direction which is transcending or degrading is not entirely open to empirical methods, though there may be signs heavy with meaning.

On the level of society, this recreation takes on the form of testimony.[55] Marcel characterises this testimony as a turning away from the "insistent and oppressive spectacle" of the "technocratic perspective"; an act which "transcends the obsession of number," which idea tends to cause it to discredit itself as a nonentity; and a recovering of the "quality of inwardness" by an act which is the epitome of freedom itself, which does not result in a "closed

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[54] Op.cit., pp.133-157.

[55] Cf. PE, pp.67-76 where Marcel takes of the "testimony" required of the observer of an accident. As an involved person he can only withhold information at the cost of moral guilt. This incident has literally cosmic implications for Marcel.

entity," but opens out toward the other.[56]

This raises the third point for clarification. It is precisely to achieve some universality of position that the point concerning knowledge not "precisely outside" objectified knowledge is made. But Marcel's clear desire to universalise does not find this medieval road out of the feared subjectivism. Rather Marcel's movement toward an ethic of a spiritual universal is grounded on other points of expansion or fulfillment. First, the value achieved is always intersubjective, such as love and admiration.[57] Second, these values are proletarian in the sense that it is responsiveness, not ability, which is the criterion for their attainment.[58] Third, this interpretation achieves its marked importance by transcending the "irrational sense," not by a reason of the "calculating understanding" but by the reason of the artist. This former kind of reason has plenty to do, but "it is by definition impossible for it . . . to plumb the depths of anything."[59]

F. Testimony as Ethical Vocation

If truth may be dissipated by obsession with technical production, is it possible that it may be recreated by some other sort of activity? Marcel points his readers toward contemplative activity. It is man as participative witness who receives the sustaining power to overcome the temptation to capitulate to the daemonic influence of a

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[56]"The Sacred in the Technological Age," op.cit., p.38; also, cf. PM, pp.62-63 for a very similar statement.

[57]Cf. Foreword to Gallagher, op.cit., p.xiii.

[58]Ibid., p.xiii.

[59]Ibid., p.xv.

"closed having" disposition. The fact that this may occur indicates that the radical cleavage in our world is not total and for final. This leaves room for the light of hope--the testimony to "being" which is the flickering chance for the renewal of ethical life.

Though it does not appear in Marcel's writings in explicit fashion, it should be clear by now that Marcel would take certain exceptions to what might be called the "ethics of vocation". Man is to be valued for his being alone, not merely for what he is able to do or for the task he is able to perform. Speaking human dignity, Marcel affirms that we need to treat each man as if we were to see him lying cold and dead tomorrow.[60] Man identified completely with his job is akin to Heidegger's inauthentic "das man". In C.P. Snow's novel, The New Men, the character, Luke, sees a moral stand on "the bomb" as outside his position as a scientist.[61] In contrast, Carl-Frederick von Weizaacker, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hamburg, who along with eighteen other German scientists has signed a notice vowing to take no part in the scientific "advance" of military uses of nuclear physics, is acting as a responsible being.[62] This position is that of a knowledgeable physicist who has integrated his scientific knowledge with mature

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[60] EBHD, pp.134-135. Professor Ian Henderson made a contrast with this position when he referred to R.D'O. Butler's statement in The Roots of National Socialism, 1783-1933, to the effect that "the German individual must find his worth in what he achieves rather than in what he is." Cf. Can Two Walk Together? The Quest for a Secular Morality (London: Nisbet, 1948), p.56.

[61] C. P. Snow, The New Men (London: Macmillan, 1961), p.138.

[62] Cf. George P. Elliott "Germany Through American Eyes," The Atlantic Monthly, Vol.2219 (May, 1967), p.54.

personhood in the modern world. Here is having moving in the direction of fulfillment. This is a witness to the well-being of men which indicates that in certain cases the willy-nilly advance of science comes into open conflict with the moral values which today appear before all men who will contemplate the events of this century.

To split the man from his being by a vocational commitment is part of the broken characteristic of our world. Marcel would seem to point us toward a vision of the whole of life as vocation. This, of course, means that it would be equally reprehensible to consider one's job as having no moral implications. In Marcel's drama, Un Homme de Dieu, there opens before us the life of a Protestant minister, Claude Lemoyne, who seemingly has forgiven his wife's adultery to save face as a minister. Ultimately this vocational ethic is condemned by the indignation of his wife, Edmee, who feel the affront of such cheap forgiveness. But a certain ambivalence is added to the picture when in the final scene parishoners visit the manse and express to M. Lemoyne their profound gratitude for his faithfulness to them as a Christian minister. His profession appears as bane and blessing in the perplexing climax of the drama.[63]

It is clear from this insightful drama that the exception to the "ethics of vocation" requires qualification in Marcel's terms. Certainly, as we have indicated, each individual decision moves the agent in a particular direction. One's professional vocation is part and parcel of that general direction. To this extent the duties imposed by one's vocation make up a part of the context out of which moral values are visualised and actualised. The danger, however,

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[63]Cf. "A Man of God," Three Plays, op.cit., pp.35-114.

is that the agent will become so imbued with the demands of his vocation that all other considerations lose their claim. In this case, having a profession has become abstracted from the rest of the agent's being. Having then verges on the daemonic. The case of Luke in C.P. Snow's novel is a case in point.

Marcel's ethical proposal seems to be as follows: The whole of one's past, which opens up the options for the future in the present context must be viewed in symbiotic unity. In this sense, man's whole life takes on the nature of a vocation which is continually examined and renewed in recreative testimony to the light it receives.

It so happens that Marcel's concept of his role as a philosopher fits into his conception of the vocation of man in such a way that he is able to speak of them simultaneously.[64] He is nonetheless cognisant of the fact that the decision-making role of the politician or doctor is subject to greater contradiction between personal vocation and responsible task.[65] At such a point it is characteristic of Marcel to point to a creative witness as the paradigmatic possibility of combining the variable modes of life, e.g. Robert Schuman .[66]

G. Concluding Statement

We have attempted to show, on the basis of Marcel's

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[64]Cf. the essay "The Philosopher and the Contemporary World," MAH, pp.76-81, where he attempts to show that a philosopher must have a vocation in a sense as wide as humanity itself, though this would not exclude special interests. It is really a plan for philosophical relevance.

[65]PF, p.16.

[66]PF, p.17. Robert Schuman, French premier (1947-1948) and foreign minister (1948-1953), is primarily remembered as the proposer of the plan for European Coal and Steel Community.

observations, that public morality is a matter of "being," which, though it gains its footing on the level of having, resists the divisive temptation to resign itself to those mundane categories. We must now give attention to the way in which the notion of "recreative testimony" enables Marcel to swing the pendulum of life from the threat of suicide to the hope of salvation.

"There is not and there cannot be any sacrifice without hope, and a sacrifice which excluded hope would be suicide."
Gabriel Marcel

CHAPTER XIII

WITNESS TO THE SACRED

A. Preliminary Remarks

Marcel's philosophical witness might well be designated, "From Suicide to Salvation". Without the tint of melodrama, one can see that Marcel has attempted to recreate the possibility of hope from the roots of despair. Du Refus à L' Invocation was the title of a series of essays published in 1940. Recently Marcel has edited a volume significant in its title: Fresh Hope for the World. Indeed, it has been characteristic of Marcel's work to look for hints of unifying hope in the most far-flung ramparts of despair.

It is instructive for this study that Marcel has focused his attention on despair. The extremity of despair, the act of suicide, has traditionally been viewed as a moral problem. It is from this depth of profound disillusionment that Marcel has urged the possibility of hope and hope's ultimate act, self-sacrifice. Thus, though recognising that individual and societal brokenness is a moral dilemma, Marcel has attempted to indicate that ethical discernment comes through intimate relation to being. This means that the solution to the malaise of our times must find its source in a considered witness to the best in human history.

It will assume an important place in our attention to clarify the relation between the general philosophic position Marcel has assumed and witness to the sacred which Marcel maintains is necessary today. In fact, these two aspects are inseparable, but for the sake of analysis they require to be designated.

B. Threat of Suicide

The temptation to commit suicide has presented itself to Gabriel Marcel in a serious manner. With a certain caution appropriate to the place of distant students, it would be fair to say that suicide has held a terrible, almost obsessive fascination for him. Does not the threat of self-destruction hang over his life, his dramatisations and his philosophical writings?

Personal Experience. We should give attention to the following evidence: First, Marcel, at least in the past, has been given to large swings in mood. On 5th March, 1929, he rejoiced: "I have no more doubts. This morning's happiness is miraculous . . . I am hemmed in . . . Happy to be so!"[1] Only sixteen days later: "I have just passed through a painful, dark time . . . The worst day, I think, was Sunday."[2] On a March Sunday, two years and a day later, the gloom had deepened. We read from the Diary:

> March 22nd, 1931 (a miserable Sunday).
> Time is like a well whose shaft goes down to death--to my death--to my perdition.
> The gulf of time: how I shudder to look down on time! My death is at its bottom and its dank breath mounts up and chills me.[3]

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[1] BH, p.15.
[2] BH, p.23.
[3] BH, p.80.

Second, his works, both dramatic and philosophic (the latter being our major concern here), are liberally sprinkled with allusions to suicide of one form or another. It seems that one of the traits of prospective suicides is a willingness to announce their intention. Third, at one point, Marcel explicitly confesses that to face the world today without faith in God would be impossible: "I fully believe that . . . at certain moments the temptation to kill myself might perhaps become irresistable."[4]

One feels restrained to add that this emphasis on Marcel's attachment to the notion of suicide does not mean to indicate any abnormality. Marcel is not subject to eerie sensations of "nausea" characteristic of his compatriot, Jean-Paul Sartre. His "obsession" with suicidal intentions points to the despair common to many sensitive individuals of genius capacity of all ages, though it points to more than just this for Marcel in the context of a disjointed world.

Forms of Despair. Despair is the general state which the psychologically observable attitude of despondency reveals. Of course, as with the strong-willed it is possible for despair to be concealed and camouflaged by some external demeanor. In either case, suicide is the brink toward which despair plunges.

For Marcel there can be no question of fate, per se. How often ministers or counselors hear: "Well, I always say that when your time comes, that's it." This, "Whatever will be, will be," attitude is not despair itself. Determinism,

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[4]MAH, p.187. This was written after World War II, but before the decade of the sixties.

in fact, makes despair a superflous accessory. The act of despair is a judgement. It is not "to accept the given sentence" or "to recognize the inevitable as such;"[5] which is the sometimes courageous, though certainty self-contained, reaction of the self-willed. It is rather "to go to pieces under this sentence, to disarm before the inevitable".[6] Marcel says: "Every man finds within him another self which is only too inclined to give up the struggle and despair."[7] And again: "Things are constantly happening which counsel us, or so one would think, to drown ourselves in despair."[8]

There are certain destructive acts, in cases not directly linked with actual physical self-annihilation, which provide enough of an analogy so that Marcel freely uses the term suicide about them. To commit "moral suicide" is to "abdicate" and "annul" oneself completely for another's benefit. This is like "servitude" and is really self-giving turned in on itself.[9] Marcel suspects that each philosopher has a skeptic somewhere inside who tells him that his reflective effort "looks rather like the solemn setting up of rows of nine-pins, so that they may be neatly knocked down." This temptation to succumb would be "philosophical suicide".[10] Again, one way to "live" in a technocratic totalitarian state is to make oneself as inconspicuous as possible and thus escape the notice of prying eyes. This is how some prisoners

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[5] HV, p.37.
[6] HV, p.37.
[7] MBII, p.161.
[8] BH, p.96.
[9] PE, p.74.
[10] MBI, p.1.

in the last war escaped transportation to work details from which the majority never returned. Such, for a while, is the answer of the major figure W. Smith, in George Orwell's novel, Nineteen Eighty-Four. But Marcel concisely designates this all too understandable maneuver as a "suicidal wish".[11] In each of these instances which stop short of the "limiting case" we must see a form of disintegration before what seems to be the given.

Meditations on Despair. "A Metaphysical Diary," published in Being and Having, contains Marcel's most thorough reflection on the act of suicide. Here are the fragments of a profound insight which Marcel never works out in full, though he often comments on this matter.

We should note, first of all, that Marcel thinks there is no conclusive logical argument against the act of suicide. He shows some of the sombre existentialist strain when he acknowledges that, "The spectacle of death is a perpetual invitation to deny. The essence of our world is perhaps betrayal."[12] Life--my life--may be considered as a value, however. When I consider it as such this existence appears to me as hazardous, since it puts that value to the test. This "I" has been awakened to find itself in a seemingly "absurd existence" which renders that value "at stake". Marcel does show that the assumption of absurdity by the nihilists is contradictory, in a way, since to call existence "absurd" is to establish the subject in an existence that has at least one value in that "it serves as a springboard for the consciousness which denies it." A

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[11] MAH, p.15.

[12] BH, p.97.

nihilist position such as this loses its thrust when it becomes explicit. Nevertheless, they are correct to observe the threat which this existence imposes on the life, if they could hold that position with any consistency. Marcel says that life is a value and existence is hazardous to that value--but nobody can prove that this is true. He says:

> We cannot hope to find even there the clue for a purely logical refutation of the thesis upheld by the champions of suicide. Nothing will force us to conceive of the hazard; no objective reason can be found to stop us from killing ourselves. We are here at the common root of freedom and of faith.[13]

A phenomenological description shows that despair is the opposite of hope. Marcel refutes Spinoza, who, in his Ethics, contrasted fear and hope.[14] The opposite of fear is desire, not hope. The despondent person no longer fears in any real sense, since he has "capitulated" to the terms of the threat which he sees. To despair is to lose poise in the face of a difficult situation. A person might yet hope in the midst of fear, as in the case of Londoners during a blitzkreig attack, but to despair is to succumb to fear. Such a person is on the brink of the suicidal act or maybe is already beginning to commit the act itself.

This matter of despair and hope must be related to freedom. Freedom, for Marcel, is not an indeterminate at the opposite end from causality. It is a mystery which transcends this cause--lack of cause dilemma. Freedom is a "gift" which I may accept or reject. To reject it is to

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[13] BH, p.93.

[14] Cf. PE, p.16, MBII, p.158 and EBHD, p.142 for references to Spinoza's alleged mistake. Relevant passages in Spinoza's Ethics, Everyman's Library edition, p.131. Parts III, XII and XIII are on the subjects of fear and hope.

perform a betrayal--a constant possibility in this world--and to imprison myself in the cause-and-effect world from which there is no hope of escape, let alone hope of salvation. The man who commits suicide chooses this denial absolutely. The act implies that I regard myself as self-caused since I take on myself the perogatives of ending it all. But freedom is precisely not this autonomy. And Marcel goes on to point out a subtle logical contradiction. The person who intends suicide holds a view that posits life as pure happening and yet at the same time claims some kind of distinction from and even mastery over this happening. How can this be? "In other words, I am my life but can I still think my life?"[15]

This raises the complex matter of availability and nonavailability. Paradoxically, the person who is most available is the one who is most present for himself. The charitable person is available and as such is rich rather than poverty stricken. Marcel gives the following as a formula: "The soul most essentially dedicated is ipso facto the most disposable."[16]

It will be observed that we have now begun to encroach once again on the whole complicated reflections concerning being and having. One can only truely give--be available (it is significant that in English we do not say "have availability")--if he has "something" to give. The person who is "self contained" or "self-possessed", though we sometimes use the latter to refer to a certain kind of poise, simply is not in a position to give, since he is

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[15] BH, p.80.

[16] BH, p.142. "Disposable" here means "at one's disposal".

living at the level of desire--of having. Obviously there is a certain "self-centeredness" about this kind of person which does not lend itself to availability. Strangely enough, it is this very awareness of self that makes it impossible to give. We have referred to Marcel's comments on the "self-conscious" person as a person who is unable to communicate because the focus of attention is on that self.[17] It is important to recognise that according to Marcel it is not only "better to give than to receive," but "it is in giving that we receive," as St. Francis of Assisi perceived long ago. Marcel says:

> At the heart of charity is presence in the sense of the absolute gift in one's-self, a gift which implies no impoverishment to the giver, far from it.[18]

In an interesting analysis, Marcel shows how life itself with its increasing experience works against our remaining available. The child and the saint are the two cases where availability is extremely present and strictly because they are least "self-conscious". Is this analysis not correct?

> As my life becomes more and more an established thing, a certain division tends to be made between what concerns me and what does not concern me, a division which appears rational enough in the making. Each of us thus becomes the centre of a sort of mental space, arranged in concentric zones of decreasing interest and decreasing adherence, and to this decreasing adherence there corresponds an increasing non-disposability.[19]

Marcel notes how a chance meeting with a stranger, where great rapport is experienced, is a break in this artificial

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[17] Supra, note 10 in chapter on "Indefinable Selfhood".

[18] BH, p.69.

[19] BH, pp.70-71; supra, note 2 in chapter on "Indefinable Self".

pattern I have built up around me. This break in the pattern shows us "the accidental character of what I have called our mental space, and . . . the rigidities on which its possibility rests."[20] On the moral level, it makes us realise the "sanctity" of human personality, "realized in certain people," and showing us the "perversion" of what we call normality.[21]

There is, however, a necessity for a certain kind of self-love. This is love of one's self for the availability it may assume under grace.[22] To commit suicide is to shut off this possibility of availability. A dedicated person, on the other hand, loves that self which may be available. Such a person wills himself as an instrument.[23] Such a person will view death as a "release" since he has more and more relaxed his grip on the desire to possess what tends to possess him. Thus, there is for Marcel a difference between self-willed resignation and a, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," attitude. That difference, as we shall yet see more clearly, is hope.

Depths of Despair. Suicide is not itself a mystery, but there is a mystery surrounding suicide which Marcel states as follows:

> The metaphysical mystery of non-disposability may essentially consist in the impossibility, for me,

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[20] BH, p.71.
[21] BH, p.71.
[22] Cf. BH, p.69.
[23] BH, p.127.

> of really being able to dispose of that which gives me the disposal of things.[24]

It will be objected that I can surely dispose of my body. But Marcel replies:

> It is obvious that such a disposal of my body has as its immediate result the impossibility of disposing of it, and even coincides with this impossibility in the final analysis.[25]

This is a complex idea. Here we catch a glimpse of the moral implications of what we shall have analysed in Marcel's writings, namely the relation of myself to my body.[26] Marcel is sure that one cannot treat one's body as just another thing because of its "irresistible encroachment" on oneself.

It is plain for Marcel that suicide and sacrifice are direct opposites. Hope is the element that separates the two. Marcel struggles to show that hope is on a plain above the level of desire and thus participates in the reality of the salvation it envisages in a way that desire can never do. Thus, Marcel can say: "There is not, and there cannot be, any sacrifice without hope, and a sacrifice which excluded hope would be suicide."[27] The suicide case is a person attached to nothing he considers valuable. He has no intimacy with himself since he is able to stand off and seriously consider destroying it. In a very real sense he is a person who degrades himself. The hopeful person, on

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[24] BH, p.82. We should recall the almost technical definition of mystery; supra, notes 6 and 7 in chapter on "Ontological Mystery," of which this definition is only a particular extension.

[25] BH, p.82.

[26] Supra, chapter on "Unitary Existence".

[27] BH, p.88.

the other hand, changes the reality of the same situation by transcending the self as datum in favor of the self that may be.

Can a person ethically commit suicide? Marcel prefers to discuss this question in terms of the inter-human which borders on the ontologically valuable. He says: "The being who is absolutely disposable for others does not allow himself the right to dispose freely of himself."[28] On the other hand, suicide is nonavailability making itself permanent. Life must know the recreation of movement towards another.

Suicide is a world possibility. In his collection of essays, Men Against Humanity, Marcel asserts that the world of technique is the world tending towards suicide. Marcel believes that the reverberation of Nietzsche's announcement that "God is dead" is the anguish of seeing that "'Man is in his death-throes.'"[29] Man faces the possibility of external catastrophe, but more important he faces the "possibilities of complete self-destruction inherent in himself."[30] Marcel intones:

> Between the physical destruction wrought by the atomic bomb and the spiritual destruction wrought by techniques of human degradation there exists, quite certainly, a secret bond; it is precisely the duty of reflective thinking to lay bare that secret.[31]

Marcel concludes that by an analysis of the "death-throes" of man it might be possible to see that "God is living

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[28] BH, p.124.
[29] MAH, pp.9-10.
[30] MAH, pp.9-10.
[31] MAH, p.10.

after all."[32]

We already noted that Marcel sees that the desire to hide oneself in the masses is at base a "suicidal wish". In a chapter of Men Against Humanity, titled "Technical Progress and Sin," he claims that man has entered into an "eschatological age". This age is so named because man is now capable in both external power and internal combustion of putting an end to himself.[33] We live in the end of the ages.

Yet, it is not technical progress, as such, which bedevils. As Marcel says: "To condemn technical progress is . . . to utter words empty of meaning."[34] It is the hubris, exorbitant, human pride, which results from effective implementation of technique for ill-considered ends which is the danger. Speed, for example, becomes something out of hand when it is treated as an end in itself. Power, too, when it is harnessed, yields a threat to moral values precisely when the ends are not developed in step with the means. Only a "witness" can hold these two in creative tension.

There is a certain difference when Marcel turns from talking about individual suicide to talk about world suicide. His reflections on the former are more satisfactory. When speaking of the individual case, he notes the "mystery" involved in that the man is unable to rid himself of himself because of the very act of disposal which makes it impossible to maintain this separation. When he discusses world suicide,

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[32] MAH, p.13.

[33] MAH, p.57.

[34] Supra, note 19 in chapter on "Recreative Testimony in a Broken World."

however, this paradoxical limitation drops away and he straight-forwardly says that such an action would leave a few "naked" in the world with only faith to build on. I feel here some of the same hesitancy which some critics have had when Marcel moves from his philosophical reflections, as such, into the sphere of international politics. I think he shows less sureness in the latter. This is far from saying that the general schema is with validity. It is to say that the practical application has been slighted in Marcel's own work.

C. Suicide or Sacrifice

"Suicide and martyrdom are strictly opposites."[35] It is this assertion by Marcel that brings us back to the matter of myself as an instrument in the hands of others. These two deeds are opposites precisely because one is the absolute denial of myself as available for others, while the other is the absolute fulfillment of my availability for others. The fulcrum point is one of inner dedication or lack of it; in outward appearance the acts may simply coincide.

Again it should be emphasized how important this limiting case of suicide is for Marcel's philosophy. In 1933 Marcel said:

> Despair is possible at any moment, in any form, and to any degree . . . The deathly aspect of this world, man, from a given standpoint, be regarded as a ceaseless incitement to denial and suicide.[36]

Marcel may be accused of "over-acting" in making suicide a significant matter. Aware of this possible

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[35] BH, p.127.

[36] PE, p.127.

criticism, Marcel points to the fact that philosophy tends to forget life. Despair, betrayal and suicide are the ways that the negation of being takes place in life. Philosophy must take cognisance of fact that we live in a world where absolute despair is possible.

Marcel, as we have noted, sees our epoc as the scene of the development in the extent of possible suicide from an individual level to a world-wide level. There has occurred an evil mixture of the will-to-power along with the technical skill to bring that power into being. This is a "broken world"; a world whose technical progress causes it to look intact but which is split at its core. It is like a watch that appears to be in working order until it is put up to the ear and only silence is "heard".

From this focus on the possibility of individual and mass suicide, we can attend to the issue of the possibility of martyrdom. Marcel is quite willing to admit that there may be an abnormal self-giving that turns out to be only pseudo-sacrifice. He says:

> It is true that there exists a pathology of giving and that there are cases of moral suicide where one person abdicates and annuls himself completely for the benefit of another; but it cannot be more clear that this has nothing to do with self-gift in the sense of which we are speaking, and which is indeed the exact opposite of servitude.[37]

As in the case of the opening statement, which stated that suicide and martyrdom are exact opposites, Marcel maintains that service and servitude are exact opposites. This, again, cannot be maintained by an external judgement. It is only

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[37] PE, p.74.

recognisable from a stance within a meaningful relationship of self-giving. From an external standpoint it is easily possible to pronounce all self-giving as an effort to destroy the other person. Sartre says that "to give is to enslave." But Marcel is unwilling to admit that all giving is confined to purely selfish motivation.

Marcel inserts the notion of "transmutation".[38] The point is this: A gift acquires the quality of "being-for-another". This is an existential quality. This quality adheres to the receiver if he responds with "creative receptivity". The one who creatively receives this gift has an "accretion" of being, unlike an accretion of wealth, but none the less real. This "real" difference is an ontological one: "The real contrast is . . . between the being who is opaque and the being who is transparent."[39] On a more empirical level, the difference is between the person who is "handy" and the one who is "unhandy". (The term is obviously not used here in the sense of a do-it-yourself man.) Put simply: A suicide victim is shut to others; a martyr is open to others.

Marcel delineates a "philosophy of inner freedom" which encompasses the possibility of hardening at the core of life--a refusal to extend my experience. I can, on the other hand, exercise power to reshape, even sacrifice, my life. This is not necessarily for a "determinate purpose" or we would be speaking of a mere "exchange". But is this not giving up one's life for "nothing"? Only secondary reflection can help us to see that sacrifice is a "worthy madness".

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[38] PE, p.75.

[39] PE, p.28.

The metaphysical ground that makes martyrdom possible is that myself and my life are not exactly identical.[40] For the participating person there is a recognition that "he most completely is, in the act of giving his life away." It is a "fulfillment," not a deprivation.

It will be objected that it is impossible to fulfill myself by doing away with myself. Marcel sees this objection and replies: "We have to distinguish carefully between the physical effect of the act of self-sacrifice and the act's inner significance." "Self-fulfillment" is to be found above the biological level that remains unseen.

To illustrate, Marcel notes that during May and June, in 1940, the Battle of France was going so badly that the outcome was a foregone conclusion. Yet Marcel holds that the sacrifice of men during these days was not useless. These men did indeed "save something". Certainly they "died at peace with themselves." They answered a kind of call that came from their very depths. Death became a release into life at a level above the merely biological.[41] Later, when it will be necessary to study Marcel's ontology of hope, we shall see that he is far from calling the above simply wishful thinking. Whether he is able to establish this point is, of course, another question to be seriously considered.

For Marcel there is a direct relationship between analytical thought and technique. One leads to the other and the latter contributes to the intensification of the former. Marcel claims over and over again that such thought and action are proper, even necessary. But the problem he

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[40] Supra, notes 16, 17 and 18 in chapter on "Indefinable Self".
[41] MBI, pp.163-167.

points out is that one cannot merely stay on this level. One must return to the reflective level which is the source of all analysis and there recollect the strands of the structure as it was before it was severed into separate pieces by the scientific approach. The example of the Battle of France serves well: To merely observe the scene one can only see that the French soldiers bought a little time or temporarily held a piece of geographical terrain. The value of this length of time or piece of land might then be judged over against the number of lives lost to accomplish this and we would then have a military assessment of the worth of the campaign. But in Marcel's view this would be an outright betrayal of those who gave their lives.

Nor is Marcel merely speaking of the psychological effect of this particular action. Whether the action of resistance as a frustration to the enemy soldiers and an uplift to the morale of the French troops is not the point at all. The issue here is that these soldiers gave their lives for an indefinable something that can be vaguely identified as love of honour, or country, or freedom.[42] There sacrifice was not a mere exchange. Nor can we reject that resistance by saying that it was all in vain.

While there is a real danger that such a view recalls the "hollow words that canting politicians and lying journalists use when they want to sound noble," the greater

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[42]None of these sacrificial goals can be strictly defined in an empirical manner, even "country" is something "in the blood" as much as having external features. For example, the love of the Russian peasant for his "mother-land" includes his "feeling" for the spaciousness of the land, which has taken on an aura intimate to his very being. Still, such examples seem less instructive than the phenomenon of "Jewishness," though they have much in common.

danger is to deny that some of the soldiers "answered a kind of call that came from their very depths."[43] The key here is an understanding of the "recuperative power" of secondary reflection; a power not self-created but brought to us "thanks to the mediation of somebody else".[44]

Marcel has stated, in other words, that suicide and martyrdom are not always separable to the mere spectator. Viewed objectively, at the level of technique (having), many sacrifices of life will seem insane either because of the seeming worthlessness of the objective or the small chance of achieving it. Viewed reflectively, however, at the level of devotement (being), no judgement can be made which finally denies the value of the action. Indeed, there are concrete events in life which point irreversably to a level of response which is full commitment to the other. At this point it may be observed, though not necessarily empirically, that suicide is as distant from this kind of sacrifice as it is possible to be.[45]

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[43] MBI, p.167.

[44] MBI, p.169.

[45] Marcel's argument that the power to dispose of myself as I please is made to look farcical in the extreme extension of this case, e.g. suicide, appears strong. The argument that suicide is in effect the act of making myself unavailable, has comparable strength. But there appears to be a problem that should be noticed: Marcel denies the usefulness of suicide on the basis that in so doing we prevent ourselves from serving as an instrument for others. Such noninstrumentality is the absence of moral presence in Marcel's terms. But is there not a limit case possible according to this position? In the effort to bring about the actuality of profoundly good causes, such as racial justice or the prevention of unjust war, suicide has been comtemplated and acted out. This last resort tactic arises because normal channels of protest and social action have become closed to effective use. It is in the light of this condition in our broken world that American students and Vietnamese Buddhist monks

D. A View of Hope

In philosophy, hope has received scant attention. The perennial debate over relation of faith to reason has brought this virtue into the limelight. The modern discussion of the I-thou relationship has caused the notion of love to come under the scrutiny of the philosophers. But hope has waited long for a champion. It has found him in Gabriel Marcel.

We shall attempt to give the multi-faceted definition of hope which Marcel puts forward. Interspersed we must place our own criticism of Marcel's position, whether they be positive or negative. On the strength of the argument Marcel rests his case against the temptation to despair.

Definition in Context. Hope is one aspect of mystery. "Hope is a mystery and not a problem," says Marcel.[46] It is related to problem, though it becomes a problem only to the extent that we yield to the temptation to degrade mystery into problem. It rises above the problem category, however, in that its own data turns back upon itself in a reflexive action intrinsic to this area of consideration.

It is hope as mystery which defies definition. A

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have committed suicide by self-immolation as a form of protest against what they regard as social evil. Is this suicide or martyrdom? We can only remind ourselves of Marcel's distinction between service and servitude, the latter being the perversion of its true presence by an extravagent evaluation of its own aptitude. To will oneself as an instrument for others must include a permanent factor which an ultimate sacrifice in a moment of time will not suffice to supply. Yet, excluding the pathology of suicide, it must be admitted that there is at times an almost infinitesimal difference between personal annulment and the sacrificial act for others in the face of overwhelming threat to life itself. Such limit cases may only be judged from inside the event, for the external appearance offers few clues for differentiation.

[46] HV, p.35.

definition is a limiting structure; hope is always opening out past any supposed boundaries set for it. Hope is itself only maintained and renewed in an atmosphere of openness "in contradistinction to a systematised dogmatics closed in on itself."[47] Any attempt to define hope, therefore, is bound to yield only a description of its shape.

This means that in the notion of hope as mystery there is an appeal to the world of science not to shut off its senses to the religious sphere of human response. For Marcel the path of hope leads inexorably into this field since this hope "shows every evidence of being religious in essence."[48] To refuse this possibility is to enclose oneself in a system without exit. Marcel is aware of the retort that his proposal leads to the enclosure of futile metaphysical speculation. He would not simply deny the charge; he would invite his accusers to consider the "closed" nature of their charge. To oppose hope as mystery is not so much bad logic as bad faith, Marcel would probably suggest.

It is not to a secular religion or naturalised faith to which Marcel points in relation to hope. Marcel said on 15th March, 1931: "Hope is only possible in a world where there is room for miracles."[49] In hardly less cryptic fashion, he writes two days later: "If I have discerned rightly, there is a close bond of union between hope and a certain affirmation of eternity, that is, of a transcendent order."[50] It does need to be said, however, that Marcel is

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[47] MJ, p.xiii. This harks back to the Bergsonian distinction between "closed" and "open".

[48] HV, p.48.

[49] BH, p.75.

[50] BH, p.76.

not simply reasserting a traditional orthodoxy which establishes its own kind of closed system. Possibly what follows will make this somewhat clearer.

Definition by Distinction. Some delicate differentiation must take place before hope can appear above the surface of human endeavor as more than an idea or a desire.

In Marcel's terms, hope as a mystery must necessarily be attached to "being" rather than "having". Again the distinction cannot be absolute. To imagine, on the one hand, that I possess hope in the sense of recognisable ownership, is to make nonsense of the term itself. Such a concept reduces hope to an instrument at my disposal, in my keeping, and under my power. This is hope as a technique which has thus ceased to be hope. To move, on the other hand, to the other extreme and say, "I am my own hope," is to rob it of all present reality. As Marcel says somewhere, "Man is more than a project."[51] If the basic element of hope is not mine, nor me, then the only alternative seems to make it a supernatural revelatory given. Not so, says Marcel: "The truth is much rather that the gift is a call to which we have to make a response."[52] In his major essay on this subject, Marcel says something like the following: In our age we have seen the increase of technique bring an increase in despair. We see that man has not yet devised a technique to free himself from himself or his techniques. Techniques are not based on hope, nor do they provide it. Hope is

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[51] MAH is a work which seeks to underline this summation.

[52] HV, pp.62-63. It is true, however, that Marcel's translators have used the term "supernatural" on occasion. For example, cf. MBII, p.184.

beyond man's capability. Yet hope is not to be discovered in the man who waits listlessly. As in all mystery, hope is created and self-creative.

If hope could be relegated to the sphere of optimism, for instance, we could well understand it as a technique. Hope then would become equivalent to "the power of positive thinking". Hope would then stand as a tool whereby I can improve my mood, change the minds of others and influence directly the course of history. But I do not possess hope as I possess a tool. At a certain point in the sickness of a dying loved one, optimism may no longer be feasible, while hope remains possible. Is this possibility merely the ability to develop a distinct image out of our wish-feelings? To admit this is again to put the notion of hope on the level of "having" or technique. This attempt to psychologise hope should be avoided. A comparison points out the fallacy. Hope is akin to love but not to desire. Desire is "strung-up" on the polarities of "having" and "not having". "But love transcends the opposition of the same to the other by planting us in Being."[53]

Definition by Contrast. Hope that is not founded by me or based in me has no place for pride. Humility and patience are, therefore, symptomatic of a man living in hope.

Pride is associated naturally with technique. Hope, on the contrary, cannot have the same association since it

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[53] BH, p.152. Marcel speaks at this point of "autonomy" and "heteronomy" as undesirable alternatives, BH, p.131. This reminds us of the language later used by Tillich. Marcel does not speak of "theonomy". His equivalent is "freedom" or "openness" orientated toward Being.

is beyond man's technical capacity. It is almost axiomatic that a humble person is unaware of it. The person filled with hope is the same. This can be shown possibly by the following contrasts. The person who despairs gives in to the facts or what seem to be facts to him. The stoic faces the facts but by a high degree of sublimation refuses to acknowledge that they have control over him; he accomplishes that by wrapping himself up in pride of self--the will to power over self. The person of hope actively overcomes the real temptation to despair, or to elevate self, by a certain "non-acceptance"; this "non-acceptance" is far removed both from "capitulation to the facts" or stoic stolidness. The difference is to be found in the lack of self-pity or self-awareness which attaches itself to hope at its purest level.[54]

Patience is what differentiates this hopeful "non-acceptance" from stoical resistant submission. Hope is not negative precisely because it does not stiffen with fear. Marcel asks what the examiner means when he says to a student: "Take your time." There seems to be a secret affinity between hope and patient relaxation. Patience in relation to our ego means that we neither allow it to capitulate or control. Marcel says lucidly:

> From this point of view, hope means first accepting the trial as an integral part of the self, but while so doing it considers it as destined to be absorbed and transmuted by the inner workings of a certain creative process.[55]

Analogously, patience towards another person should not be degraded as indifference but rather upgraded to active belief

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[54]The essence of the paragraph may be found in HV, pp.36-39.

[55]HV, p.39.

in him as a creature of possibility. Marcel says that the formula: "I place my hope in you" is possibly the highest form of hope man may know.[56]

In the course of this brief description of hope in relation to humility and patience and in distinction from pride and agitation, it has been necessary to mention in passing another important term--fear. As we have noted, Marcel believes that Spinoza was wrong in his Ethics when he considered hope and fear as opposites.[57] They are not opposites; both have expectation in them. The true opposites are hope and despair. The true correlates are fear and desire since both are interested in either protecting or pleasing the self. Fear, like desire, is an attitude of exclusion toward the future; hope is inclusive. There is bondage in fear; hope is correlated with freedom.

Definition by Clarification. In the first series of Gifford Lectures, Marcel said:

> These very difficult notions that I have been expounding will, I believe, become easier to grasp in the second series of these lectures, when I deal with the nature of hope.[58]

The difficult notions to which Marcel refers are, among others, those of self, time and intersubjectivity and being.

We have already intimated the fact that hope seems to be related to the submerged or indefinable self. We have already said that hope does not depend on me as the material or efficient cause. When the self becomes conscious of its power is the occasion when it either prostrates itself

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[56] HV, p.41.

[57] Supra, note 14.

[58] MBI, p.94.

before the facts, seeking recognition of its lack of power, or draws itself up to its full height before the facts, seeking recognition of its massive manipulative power. Both forms of selfhood are antithetic to hope. Hope is rather exuded from a self who incorporates the facts into himself and in positive anticipation goes beyond them.

Hope is the attitude of an "eschatological consciousness".[59] Negatively, this means that I refuse the "prisoner self" of self-pity or self-power which protrudes when I treat the situation before me as a problem in one way or another. It means, positively, that I may with the "self of love and prayer" engage in "preparation" for the future.

Hope considers time in its depth. The self that hopes seems to be something like a "detached observer" who is yet involved in a "kind of process".[60] Hope is lost sight of when viewed from the stance of "established experience".[61] Hope opens up time, which otherwise is a closed prison. The concept of chronological time is one that tends to split up and thus to separate; hope rather aims at "reunion, at recollection, at reconciliation; in that way . . . it might be called a memory of the future."[62]

Hope must be considered an appeal from an I to a thou. Obviously we may consider it in other ways but the notion of "interaubjectivity" always crops up at this point.

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[59] This paragraph is based on WH, pp.159-171.

[60] HV, p.33.

[61] HV, p.52.

[62] HV, p.53. We should recall Marcel's sympathy for Nietzsche's notion of "Eternal Return".

We have already mentioned that hope has an attitude of patience toward the other person; he treats the other as a creature of possibility; "I place my hope in you." Marcel says:

> Everything looks as though we can only speak of hope where the interaction exists between him who gives and him who receives, where there is that exchange which is the mark of all spiritual life.[63]

Hope, then, must be seen as more than a "subjective tendency".[64] Marcel believes that Pascal and Proust saw the "radical subjectivity" of hope without also seeing the nature of communion without which it could not exist. Marcel says:

> Now it is precisely where love exists, and only where it exists, that we can speak of hope, this love taking shape in a reality which without it would not be what it is. When this has come about it is untrue to claim that hope is merely a subjective stimulant, it is, on the contrary, a vital aspect of the very process by which an act of creation is accomplished.[65]

Marcel adds that if communion is the bond of hope, then seemingly "despair and solitude" must be fundamentally "identical".[66] The key assertion then is this: "'I hope in thee for us.'"[67] The "thou" holds "us" together in hope.

But with this assertion of interhuman hope Marcel finds it impossible to stop. This communal hope or interacting hope is not self generated or mediated. It is mediated

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[63] HV, p.50.
[64] HV, p.58.
[65] HV, pp.57-58.
[66] HV, p.58.
[67] HV, p.60.

by what Marcel has called the "non-mediatisable immediate".[68] It is the intersubjective or mediatory nature of the act of hope that illuminates the "vital link" or the primary mediation or the initial possibility of hope. We are brought to the heart of hope as mystery which verges on the notion of the Absolute Thou.

At this juncture it seems that the relation of hope to the ultimate mystery must involve us in the question of Being. I quote:

> Hope consists in asserting that there is at the heart of being, beyond all data, beyond all calculations, a mysterious principle which is in connivance with me, which cannot but will that which I will, if what I will deserves to be willed and is, in fact, willed by the whole of my being.[69]

In a later essay the notion of interacting hope sets Marcel off on this less abstract but still slightly vague reflection:

> This absolute Thou in whom I must hope but whom I also have always the possibility of denying, not only in theory but in practice, is at the heart of the city which I form with myself and which, as experience has given tragic proof, retains the power of reducing itself to ashes. It must be added that this city is not a monad and that it cannot establish itself as a distinct and isolated centre, without working for its own destruction, but that on the contrary it draws the elements of its life from what is brought to it along canals, often very badly marked out, from friendly cities, of which however it often scarcely knows the name or the situation. It is to a consciousness of these reciprocities, of this

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[68] MJ, p.248 and EBHD, p.82; supra, note 31 in chapter on "Unitary Existence".

[69] PE, p.16. There is both a notion of the absolute and of the personal commitment here. These two are brought together in Marcel's notion of "ontological weight" where both the nature of the commitment and the strength of the commitment are considered together.

> mysterious and incessant circulation, that I open my soul when I hope--a prophetic consciousness, as we have said, but vague and in danger of becoming obliterated to the extent that it seeks to pass itself off as second sight.[70]

Definition by Analogy and Illustration. If despair could be correctly defined as an admission of "insolvency," then hope might be oppositely defined as the reception of credit.[71] For Marcel despair and hope are equal possibilities in this life. The ledger will show bankruptcy or solvency according to the way we face the facts and recreate their possibility for us.

Marcel's plays and philosophical writings show his love for his native land, France. It is not surprising then that he asserts that the true patriot cannot believe in the death of his country. To the extent that I affirm or deny the possibility of the liberation of my beleaguered homeland, to that extent I keep alive a real bond which unites me to that land.[72]

But, as was mentioned earlier, this illustration of the momentary credit and the native land do not seem persuasive to me. They fall on the factual instances when bankruptcy has been permanent and when nations have disappeared. Certainly a better illustration is the mysterious endurance of the Jewish people throughout the centuries by hope maintained in persecution. Of course, Marcel is simply trying to give tangible illustrations of the mystery of hope.

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[70] HV, p.61.
[71] PE, pp.15-16.
[72] Supra, note 18.

Marcel does give the helpful illustration of the parents who discover that their small child is a mentally deficient child.[73] To refuse to admit it or to admit it with an attitude of resistance are both improper ways to face the facts, just as is the more unlikely way of admitting it as if it made no difference. Hope lies only in accepting the child as it is and facing the future as possibility, though full of limitation.

It seems that this notion of hope receives its full meaning, however, only where both the personal and the religious come together. This may be why it is common for him to refer to propheoy and prayer in relation to hope. Both cases are illustrations of active life becoming deeply involved in modes of spiritual expression.

For Marcel prophecy is related to the category of hope, not precisely of knowledge.[74] The belief in progress is a sort of "metaphysical optimism" and is to be "radically rejected".[75] Prophecy is rather an expression of a consciousness of a durable relation extending through the contingencies of the future.

Prayer is in the same category. It is my maintenance of a bond between myself and the Absolute Thou. It is wrong to think of prayer either in terms of causal efficiency or as a thing of value in and of itself. Like prophecy, it is an expression of hope, not as the only creator or sole maintenance of hope, but as the appeal to that possibility which is beyond human expectation. For Marcel, hope is "the spring,

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[73] I am unable to locate the source of this illustration in Marcel's writings. A similar illustration is in HV, pp.41-42.

[74] BH, p.33.

[75] MJ, p.97.

the leaping of the gulf".[76]

E. Concluding Remarks

Marcel refuses to accept some of the notions current in our day. He does not simply reject them out of hand but by philosophical research attempts to examine them closely. Two of the notions which do not stand up as Marcel sees it are the following: First, that the hope of personal salvation is a selfish wish. Second, that ethics rest on a sounder footing when separated from the notion of the mystery of hope.

The point where hope of salvation transmutes the wish for escape is a concrete illustration of having becoming being. Marcel takes Georges Bataille to task for insisting that spiritual life must renounce any selfish principle of personal salvation.[77] He says that Bataille has set up a dogmatics in reverse. He sees in Bataille's position a certain disdain for all who disagree. Marcel has, in fact, shown that hope at its highest point is not simply a wish and a belief; it is also a gift which comes with an appeal to be welcomed. Personal hope is not the result of fear when it is truely hope. Fear causes a stiffening; hope implies a certain relaxation of patience and humility. Marcel's phenomenological description of hope has, at least, made this a feasible explanation.

It will be obvious that Marcel's notion of hope is entangled with the concept of recreative ethics. That there is a distinctly spiritual element in both notions cannot be denied. In fact, Marcel is anxious to make this association

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[76] BH, p.33.

[77] HV, p.198.

clear, though he does not want to establish a direct one-to-one relationship between religion and ethics. He argues persuasively that it is only in an atmosphere that is open to spiritual insight that the light of hope can point the way to the relational virtues of faith and love, through which men become reconciled to each other.

PART THREE

FREEDOM AND VALUE: MARCEL VERSUS SARTRE

"It is through a creative interpretation that we are able to give life the countenance of destiny."

Louis Pamplume

CHAPTER XIV

AFFIRMATION OF FREEDOM

A. Introductory Remarks

In spite of rumours to the contrary, the major contemporary existential thinkers have not been satisfied with purely individualistic ethics.[1] This includes Marcel. The question which Marcel's thought must seek to answer is this: Can an existentially oriented ethics escape the isolation of its subjective stance without recourse to some form of natural law doctrine? In other words, does the ethics of being and having move toward universality to the extent of being able to offer guidance for personal and social ethical life?

In order to discover the answer to this question it will be helpful to compare Marcel with his famous compatriot, Jean-Paul Sartre. By a comparison of these two French thinkers on the crucial topic of freedom, it ought to be possible to begin to answer the question we have posed. This

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[1] Daniel Day Williams, in Wertsch Lectures of St. Paul's School of Theology--Methodist, Kansas City, Missouri, criticised existentialists' individual ethics in the Spring of 1965. Heidegger has written little on ethics. Jaspers has certainly moved towards the universal. We shall show in this chapter that Sartre and Marcel have been dissatisfied with pure individualism, though in very different ways.

confrontation will lead us eventually to the question of the place of values in their respective structures of thought. Though we have already examined Marcel's notion of values to some extent, a comparison of Marcel with Sartre will be in order, since this is the confrontation which has apparently driven Marcel to work out his ideas in this area. This perspective of comparison will clarify since Marcel has always been acutely aware of contemporary alternatives, especially one such as Sartre's.

In the case of freedom and the values it allows us to affirm, however, it is the intention to use Sartre as more than a foil for Marcel's position. Marcel himself has too much respect for the intellectual brilliance of his younger contemporary for a study such as this to use him in that way. Rather there is here an attempt to take Sartre's thought seriously, as the major alternative to Marcel's thought which it represents. Of course, our first duty is to bring further elucidation and application to Marcel's own premises. This progression should enable us to come to an approximate response to the exigency for personal substance and interpersonal meaning in ethical decision making.

As a general outline for the comparison attempted here, it will get us off the mark if a general basis for understanding the concern of these two philosophers on freedom and value is established. A discussion will ensue concerning the effect our understanding of freedom has on our conception of the self, the possibility of intersubjective phenomena, and our situation in the world. This should allow us to examine with care the kind of values one can affirm from the respective standpoints of Marcel and Sartre. In this fashion we may arrive at an answer to the question we have posed.

B. Neo-Socratic Versus Existentialist

There is no doubt that Marcel has taken Sartre seriously. This has been against the advice of certain colleagues at the Sorbonne who warned that Sartre was simply a scandal-monger. But Marcel replied that "Sartre's philosophy was much too impressive . . . not to be examined with the utmost seriousness and objectivity."[2] Thus, the essays, "Existence and Human Freedom," and "Being and Nothingness," represent serious attempts by Marcel to come to grips with Sartrean philosophy during the 1944 to 1950 era, when Sartre was "the rage" in France. This serious attitude speaks well for the integrity of Marcel since Sartre has succeeded, however unwittingly, in the usurpation of Marcel's place as existentially-oriented philosopher and dramatist. That is to say that the eclipse of Marcel's star by Sartre does not appear to have caused Marcel to brood in sullen bitterness or to attack Sartre carelessly.[3]

Sartre, on the other hand, seems to have largely ignored Marcel in his public utterances. This is in spite of several facts worthy of notice. There seems to have been a friendly association at one time, since Marcel records that Sartre read a paper at his house; at that time Marcel suggested that Sartre devote attention to an "analysis of the viscous". This Sartre did in his later work. It is strange that the pioneer existentialist and phenomenologist in France, Gabriel Marcel, should receive so little attention from the acknowledged spokesman of that position in France since World War II,

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[2] PE, p.33.

[3] Heinemann, op.cit., p.87, says rightly that Sartre stole the existential show from Marcel in France; also, cf. PE, p.73 and CF, pp.89-92.

especially since Sartre often uses the comparative method in his work. Be that as it may, there was probably no obligation for Sartre to give any place to Marcel. His thought is original. In one public reference of which I am aware, Sartre does refer to M. Julien Benda and Marcel in the same breath: The two are typed as "clerks," oppressing the masses. Benda, the jester, has chosed the cap and bells; Marcel, the watch-dog , has chosen the kennel.[4] This sarcastic criticism is almost unintelligible in the light of the established independence of these two thinkers.[5] Also, to criticise Marcel and Benda in one breath seems to show ignorance of the fact that Marcel has taken sharp exception to Benda's writings on at least one occasion.[6] Sartre's friend and disciple, Simone de Beauvoir, records that Sartre as a student at the Sorbonne, with a couple of his friends, classified fellow students and other intellectuals according to Cocteau's "Eugenic cosmology". Marcel and Charles DuBos, among others, belonged to "the Cataboryx," a "metaphysical animal" which "expresses itself in borborygmic rumbles."[7] The most well-known reference Sartre has centred on Marcel occurred in the lecture, "'L 'Existentialism est un Humanisme". There he asserts that there are two kinds of existentialism, his atheist brand and Marcel's Christian type.[8]

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[4]Jean-Paul Sartre, What is Literature?, trans. Bernard Frechtman, (London: Methuen, 1950), p.117. Referred to in Kingston, op.cit., p.117.

[5]Benda is famous for his intransigent autonomy.

[6]BH, pp.57-68.

[7]Simone de Beauvoir, Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter, trans. James Kirkup (London: Andre' Deutsch, 1963), p.325.

[8]Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948), p.126. This reference lumps Jaspers in with Marcel as a "Catholic Christian". Jaspers' Christianity is debatable; his Catholicism is nonexistent.

It is vital that Marcel and Sartre be compared. This has been done with surprising infrequency in English works. Major commentaries on Sartre pay only passing attention to Marcel; considerable efforts on Marcel return the compliment for the most part. F. Temple Kingston is the only writer who gives extended critical and comparative coverage to both men.[9] Thus, the need for such comparison obviously exists because of its present dearth. Further, our interest in Marcel as an ethicist may well be compared with Sartre whose philosophy has gained attention among the "masses" for his radical ethical positions. And a point not least in importance for our method of presentation; Sartre offers the logical point for comparative examination of Marcel's philosophical ethics.

We must regard the attempt to finally establish whether or not Marcel is an existentialist, as a relatively insignificant academic question. Though he allowed Étienne Gilson to publish the 1947 series of essays in his honour, Existentialisme Chrétien: Gabriel Marcel, by the 16th February, 1948, at a meeting of the Socratic Club at Oxford University, he had denied he was an existentialist.[10] I think Marcel sufficiently answers the question for our purpose in a relatively recent statement:

9Supra, note 2. There is extant an unpublished Ph.D. thesis by Sister Mary A. Schaldenbrand, S.S.J., titled, "Phenomenologies of Freedom: An Essay on the Philosophies of Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel". It might be added that Wilfred Desan in his volume, The Tragic Finale, gives sharp focus to some points where Marcel and Sartre differ. Also, Roger Troisfontaines in Existentialism and Christian Thought, makes some interesting comparisons. These last two works will be referred to later.

10F.C. Copleston, Existentialism and Modern Man (London: Blackfriars, 1951), p.12.

> I wish to point out that I am far from endorsing existentialism as defined by Sartre; besides, this extreme existentialism I have never accepted. All I wish to do is to assert the rights of phenomenology in the light of which the primacy of experience over what could be called pure thought must be rigorously preserved.[11]

In other words, while not wishing to make the radical motion that "Existence precedes essence," Marcel, quite as much as Sartre, is willing to assert the primacy of experienc over pure thought. This Marcel now chooses to call "Neo-Socratism" to distinguish it from the "existentialism" which Sartre has for some time dominated.

C. Marcel and Sartre on Freedom

It is difficult to speak of freedom in Marcelian terms. This is because freedom falls in the region of the metaproblematic, and this area as we have noted, is especially difficult for language to explicate. In describing mystery, on one occasion, Marcel says:

> What is inappropriately called the problem of freedom provides us with another example. I have defined a mystery as 'a problem which encroaches on its own immanent conditions of possibility,' and this encroachment is particularly obvious in the case of freedom. For freedom is a ground of that very thought which tries to conceive it.[12]

The last sentence of that quotation gives us another clue concerning the difficulty of speaking of freedom from Marcel's stance. For the most part, Marcel has assumed that we have sufficient freedom to get on with the task of living and doing philosophy, consequently he has never turned his critical attention upon this notion for any sustained period

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[11] EBHD, p.96.

[12] CF, p.69; also CF, p.55.

of time.[13] With patience, however, one can ferret out the general structure of his understanding of freedom as it appears sprinkled throughout the whole extent of his scattered writings. Marcel does say much about creativity which seems to be his method of speaking of freedom in an ethical context.[14]

Roger Troisfontaines is correct to say that one of the basic existentialist assumptions in ethical discussion is belief in some kind of human freedom.[15] How this freedom is to be understood in the context of ethical decision, however, is not an assumption; it rather looms as a primary issue to be dealt with in the context of ethical conceptualisation. This is where Marcel and Sartre diverge.

Ostensibly, at least, Sartre's position is not too difficult to grasp. Mary Warnock in her study on Sartre describes human freedom, along with the poser of self-analysis, which is almost synonomous in Sartre's thought, as one of the "twin pillars" in Sartre's philosophy.[16] His notion of freedom is supposedly based on his understanding of Descartes. Immediately one recalls what we have already said in regard to Marcel's refutation of the Cartesian standpoint. I would assert here and now, with the hope that some of the subsequent material will support this, that the basic contrast in the two thinkers concerning freedom is the acceptance or rejection of the Cartesian starting point of isolated doubt. Troisfontaines,

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[13] Times Library Supplement, op.cit., p.110; cf. PE, pp.94-95.

[14] Cf. EBHD, p.165. We have noticed Marcel's notion of creativity already.

[15] This is, in fact, a truism that would apply to all kinds of ethics; Cf. "What is Existentialism," Thought, Vol. XXXII (Spring, 1958), p.522.

[16] Mary Warnock, The Philosophy of Sartre (London: Hutchinson, 1965), p.13.

in a slightly different context, but one that would apply here says: "Experience does not decide between the different choices; it depends on them."[17] Marcel believes that Sartre by-passes the initial sense of wonder common to us all, and begins with the intellectual conception of doubting everything. If Marcel makes a "leap in the dark" it is not at the end of his discussion, as in Aquinas, but at the very outset of thought, and, of course, it is this intention in the discussion of the recollective nature of secondary reflection to show that this initial amazement in the midst of existence is as near to a "given" as we are allowed to contact.

Possibly this can be illumined by this question. Is freedom a gift or a condemnation? This question delineates one of the startling differences between Marcel and Sartre. Both admit that the project of freedom hoves into view when I accept responsibility for my attitudes and for my acts. But from what perspective shall I see this arrival of freedom? For Marcel the notion of <u>freedom as a gift</u> is this proper perspective. Indeed, this perspective is necessary for an understanding of the meaning of freedom.

What is a gift? It is more than a mere physical transfer. It carries with it the factor of unconditionality in that it is not meant to seduce, blackmail or obligate. It has the essential feature of inwardness, which may be called generosity. This generosity is both the "soul" of the gift and, in a sense, the gift itself. In accompaniment must go the assurance of the receiver that he is not being imposed upon by the giver; this is a necessary complement of that

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[17] <u>Existentialism and Christian Thought</u>, trans. Martin Jarret-Kerr (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1949), p.49. This is a bit too strong for Marcel's view.

parallel intention in the giver. Here receptive giving and active receiving merge to form the gift event.[18]

None of these dimensions of the gift event can be eliminated. That there often can be a convergence of these elements in one event, experience leads us to doubt. Small wonder that Sartre can establishthe rather solid analysis that such a "gift" never occurs. To include both the factuality and the perspective on both sides of the event is the only possibility for freedom to arise. Anything else is not gift giving and receiving; something less degrades freedom into what might be called autocracy.[19]

Recognition that I am a receiver of the gift of freedom brings that possibility to life. In Marcel's analysis freedom has no meaning apart from a positive affirmation on my part. Significantly, Sartre's concept of freedom, arising out of his war experiences, is basically a free capacity to resist torture and death.[20] Marcel would not ignore the power of neantisation, but he would speak of the positive element here, not in terms of project, but in terms of gift reception and giving.

Marcel would deny that what we have called perspective is pure subjectivism; rather he engages in an analysis which leads him to say that a gift does not come into being until it is received with positive affirmation. This power of positive

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[18]Cf. CF, p.28, where Marcel claims that the insight of Aristotle has been abused by a Kantism which says that receiving is to be identified with "undergoing," in more general terms, with "passivity"; also cf. PE, p.65.

[19]Cf. MBII, pp.118f.

[20]See Jean-Paul Sartre, The Republic of Silence (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1947); quoted in Heinemann, op.cit., p.114.

reception is not the capacity to manufacture what is not already present to me. If I claim freedom as my ability to possess it, I paradoxically enclose myself within the boundaries of my own supposed capacity. If, on the other hand, I acknowledge that freedom is a gift, but refuse to receive it in positive openness, I nullify its effect as surely as if I had shut the door in the face of the donour of a box of chocolates to cheer up my illness.

Sartre's analysis leads him to quite different conclusions. "I am condemned to be free," is his well known dictum. More elaborately, he says:

> I am condemned to exist for ever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act . . . This means that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself or, if you prefer, that we are not free to cease being free.[21]

Even if freedom could be regarded as a gift, this would scarcely be a value to Sartre's mind: "To give is to appropriate by means of destroying and to use this act of destruction as a means of enslaving others."[22] Or in a note from The Reprieve, which Marcel believes to be crucial:

> Freedom coincides at its roots with the non-being which is at the heart of man. For a human being, to be is to choose himself; nothing comes to him either from without or from within himself that he can receive or accept.[23]

Marcel admits that there are certain "extreme cases" where this analysis applies, but he argues that it is "impossible to generalise from this to the universal nature of giving."[24]

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[21] Being and Nothingness (London: Methuen, 1957), p.439. Hereafter noted as BN.

[22] BN, op.cit., p.594.

[23] The Reprieve, trans. Eric Sulton (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948), p.363.

[24] PE, p.60.

Of course, he is in danger of the same kind of abstraction but it would seem that he escapes it by refusing to dogmatise his conclusionaand by allowing Sartre's point in certain "extreme cases". He believes that freedom as condemnation is equivalent to the announcement that freedom is "a deprivation, a loss . . . a defect".[25] It will be necessary for us to ascertain in relation to Marcel's discussion of the issue, how freedom viewed in such a negative fashion can eventually gain the countenance of an absolute value for Sartre. For now, Marcel makes our point: "For Sartre, to receive is incompatible with being free."[26] Sartre would seem to agree with this analysis: Freedom is a lonely cell.

D. The Free Self: Bracketed or Hyphenated?

It is possible to formulate the divergence between Marcel and Sartre on the freedom of individual selfhood according to the myth of the open or closed self. The picture is that of a self bracketed off from the world or, what is the same, of other selves versus a self which is able to slip under its hyphen-like enclosure. Lest this become mere picturesque language, it is necessary to be a bit more technical in our description.

Actually, this picture is suggested by Marcel himself, though in translation the punctuation marks are slightly different than we have suggested.

> Néantir does not in any way mean to annihilate or to annul, but, to use a frequent illustration of this author, [Sartre] it means much more to surround the being with a casing of non-being, or, as I personally should be more ready to say, to put it into the parenthesis of non-being.[27]

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[25] PE, p.57.

[26] PE, p.60.

[27] HV, p.169; also, cf. MBII, p.115.

The myth of what we have called the "bracketed self" is based on the "irreconcilable opposition" which exists between the being-in-itself (l'être en-soi) and being-for-itself (l'être pour-soi).[28] It is, in fact, this utter separation between the en-soi and the pour-soi which makes it impossible for the self to fill itself up and escape its enclosure. Marcel, on the other hand, is quite willing to agree that selfhood is in a sense an "enclosure," but he adds two important stipulations: First, the enclosure moves; second, the enclosure is vulnerable.[29] In Sartre's version, the self cannot move; it can only successively reemerge only to be drowned in the en-soi.[30] I take Marcel to mean by "vulnerable," that highly sensitive aspect of human selfhood which is the setting of his responsive activity in a situation. Sartre, on the other hand, sees the freedom of the self in such an extreme fashion that one may at times suspect that the situation in life has nothing to do with the reality of freedom. Thus, Sartre's figure, Mathieu, in The Reprieve, says: "I am my own freedom."[31]

This disagreement over the nature of the self (no doubt both Marcel and Sartre would object to that usage, though it is to be wondered if Sartre's Cartesianism does not make such usage appropriate for him) can be traced to the divergence over the Cartesian cogito.[32] The fact that for

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[28] Cf. HV, p.167.

[29] HV, p.16.

[30] BN, p.611. This is for the moment to leave out the possibility of "project" in Sartre's terms.

[31] Supra, note 23.

[32] Warnock calls this psychology of Sartre's only a "quasi-Cartisian" one, op.cit., p.45. She believes it is based on the German phenomenologists, Brentano and Husserl, rather than on Descartes himself, op.cit., p.18.

Sartre the intentional consciousness is always simultaneously aware of itself means that the self is constantly encasing itself in objectivity. This is what we mean by bracketing. Marcel is quite willing to acknowledge this duality on the analytical level. That is, he would admit the obvious nature of the awareness of being aware of what Sartre calls the "prereflective cogito". But Marcel points to the level of secondary reflection which transcends both self-analysis and the awareness of self-analysis in a recuperative activity of of the whole person. Thus, Marcel points to the moving and sensitive self:

> He is aware of himself far less as a being [objective] than as a desire [exigency in the technical sense] above everything which he is and is not, above the actuality in which he really feels he is involved and has a part to play, but which does not satisfy him, for it falls short of the aspiration with which he identifies himself.[33]

Put in the code we are using, it is clear that if Sartre used the categories of being and having he would use them in an inverse nature and value to Marcel's usage. For Sartre, being itself is the objective and the static; Marcel sees being itself as sursum, not sum; it is that which reaches beyond. But this latter definition only applies to Sartre's nonbeing, that which negates its own reality by moving beyond it. Reality for Sartre appears to be that which would for Marcel be a form of having; that is, the objective and static. Marcel affirms that the only reality is the being that aspires--the real unity of the moving and sensitive being which moves beyond the status quo as a unity.

Here two things come to light which are of interest and significance. Though in both cases the discussion

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[33] HV, pp.25-26.

eventually points us to an ontological ethics, in Marcel's case the ontology is a dynamic one. This explains our myth of the bracketed versus the hyphenated self. Sartre inverts Marcel's usage of being and having. He makes an absolute separation between them (though his terminology calls them both aspects of being) and proceeds to place value on the term Marcel devalues. It will be noted that they both give value to the same aspect of the equation, though in vastly different ways.[34]

The second element that appears, is the fact that for Sartre the affirmed element of freedom is only a having because there is no transcendent ground of being to give it support, hence it can only have its reality in what I wrest from the factual environment. For Marcel, having is transformed into the freedom of being because it recognises a transcendent to which it can make appeal.

Possibly an illustration of this "closed versus opening" self can be found in Sartre's own picture of the girl who shows bad faith (mauvaise foi) by pretending she is a thing. She keeps a rendevous with a man whose intentions are obviously not honourable, but this fact she excludes from her consciousness. She knows she will have to make a decision about her own virtue sooner or later, but she prefers not to think about that. She allows him to hold her hand and establishes a relationship based on a self-deception about the escort's real intentions.

Now both Sartre and Marcel see in this example a form of bad faith. For Sartre the fault is the refusal to free

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[34]It is significant that Merleau-Ponty--long a colleague of Sartre's--says that he deliberately inverts Marcel's usage of being and having. Cf. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, loc.cit.

herself to be what she is--the wanton companion of a man seeking his own pleasure. For Marcel, sincerity would be more appropriate here also, but only in the hope that this sincere assessment will become the basis for the girl to be what her life is not now. Marcel asks: "At bottom, when I admit that I am what in fact I am, is it not in the secret hope of being somehow delivered by this confession from being what I am?"[35] In other words, freedom of the self for Sartre means to admit that I am what I am, i.e., a woman willing to be used. This enables the self to escape its predicament to the extent that it conformed with its own image.[36] Marcel, on the other hand, sees the alignment with my own self as an act of good faith only insofar as it puts me in a place to transcend my own life to this point. Here the difference between closed and open having should be crystal clear.[37]

Another striking myth which gives a picture of Sartre's notion of freedom is the theory that freedom is synonomous with consciousness. Consciousness is defined as that which is what it is not and is not what it is. This means that freedom is a nothingness without equivocation. Thinking of being

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[35] PE, p.48.

[36] Marcel says that Sartre's thought is "dominated and . . . hypnotized by a given image," PE, p.43.

[37] Marcel incidentally puts another criticism to this affirmation of sincerity. He says: "If sincerity itself is a manifestation of bad faith, then bad faith cannot exist. Bad faith cannot be defined, it cannot assume its specific character except by opposition to sincerity. If sincerity is a form of bad faith, what is left of bad faith?" PE, pp.48-49. This appears to me as sound logic. It is on the same basis that we might inquire of Sartre why the lack of the existence of God is "extremely embarrasing". Existentialism and Humanism, op.cit., p.33.

as the atmosphere through which the aeroplane flies, we may think of that focus of freedom as that decompressed air pocket which gives the plane a sudden, terrifying lurch. This is freedom, discovered for Sartre in the lurch of dread.

The "gap" is produced by Sartre's analysis. He insists that freedom is not an essence, rather the essence of man.[38] Freedom is conceived in this analysis as the end in itself. Troisfontaines analyses this position in words which the Sartre of Being and Nothingness could not but affirm:

> To be free merely means that it is legitimate for me to consider the meaning of an inevitable reality in the way I want to, and that I define myself by this very attitude.[39]

What kind of ethical agency does this create? Troisfontaines answers precisely:

> The hope is that freedom, instead of pursuing an end, should take itself as a standard of value. Then, in willing itself to be just what it is, in committing itself to action without any anxious desire for efficacy or morality, this will be sufficient to itself and man will be God.[40]

"Willing itself to be just what it is." This is where the "gap" occurs. Transcendence produces an inner break. Mounier refers to this as the "bounding leap of the self".[41] Man is more than what he is now, though he is not yet what he shall be. This is the nothingness coiled at the heart of being.[42] Precisely because man's transcendence is

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[38] Cf. MBII, p.115.

[39] Existentialism and Christian Thought, op.cit., p.62.

[40] Ibid., p.63.

[41] Op.cit., p.30.

[42] PE, p.50.

only this "nothingness," he feels the threat of "viscosity," of the overwhelming power of the "in-itself" which threatens to swallow him up. Such is the estranged position of the human being. His essence is freedom, which is nothingness.[43]

This gap, it must be understood, is not a Kantian "as if". This is no mere perspective either. Warnock says: "It is rather that we know we must be free, if we are conscious at all; and we cannot but know that we are conscious."[44] The "gap" is in fact the certainty of freedom. Freedom is then this act of going beyond in an active rather than a passive sense. Freedom is doing rather than being.

This whole analysis may well be recapitulated in terms not unlike Sartre's but with meaning vastly different in nature. Marcel, for a start, admits that freedom is related closely to the consciousness of man. What he denies is that man's essence is freedom. More accurately in Troisfontaines words, it is the "condition of a higher aim".[45] Marcel would deny that he could say anything about the essence of man *per se*, since this implies *a priori* a stance which the existential thinker may not assume in good faith. Even further, Marcel asks what logical sense it makes to say "I am free." Is this not as tautologous as "I am I"?[46]

Marcel disagrees strongly then with the Sartrean contention that freedom has an all or nothing character. Sartre can say in dogmatic tones that man is "wholly and forever free".[47]

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[43] Cf. Warnock, *op.cit.*, pp.61-62.

[44] *Ibid.*, p.118.

[45] *Existentialism and Christian Thought*, *op.cit.*, p.118.

[46] Cf. EBHD, pp.146 and 152.

[47] BN, p.441.

Marcel replies to Sartre: "We cannot regard freedom as ultimate."[48] He argues that this is a logical contradiction which occurs when our freedom denies itself while believing itself to be expanding. This happens when our freedom "deifies itself in fact . . . i.e. when it claims that the world revolves around itself."[49] Also, even when I make freedom my primary quality, I have transformed it into an essence--something which I have. This is true, at least, if we are using essence in the traditional sense of the unchanging static element. Such a conception is a denial of our experience that we are at any given time either more or less free. In a sense contrary to Marcel's position, such a claim about my freedom identifies it with my life, rather than that which transcends my life, which I am also. Marcel has lately said: "There is no more fatal error than that which consists in regarding freedom as an attribute."[50]

Marcel recognises this "gap" in the human being. His careful analysis of the question, "Am I my life?" in the first series of the Gifford Lectures brings this out in clear focus.[51] In the second series of the lectures he noticed this matter again:

> There are times when my faith seems to me like a stranger: there is a gap between the believing or praying me and the reflecting me.[52]

It may be wondered if this gap is the same as Sartre is speaking about, but the difficulty probably arises from the religious

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[48] CF, p.233.

[49] CF, p.30.

[50] EBHD, p.146.

[51] MBI, pp.148-170.

[52] MBII, p.126. Supra, note 47 in chapter on "Secondary Reflection".

terminology. Marcel is quite willing to see the seeming abyss that yawns at the heart of our inner being. He admits: "I cannot . . . say that I am here or that I am not here in the same sense as I say that this box of matches is, or is not, on this table."[53] I do escape myself. I am not my life. Yet the meaning of this for Marcel is quite different than for Sartre. As we shall see more fully in a moment, this difference relates to whether the ego is seen as an "isolated reality" or an "emphasis" in experience which I desire to recreate.[54]

Marcel's view is that the free self overcomes "the gap" in its being by recreative participation in its situation. Marcel can say this by, first of all, making an apt criticism, to which we have already referred, against the Kantian notion that only the passive may receive.[55] In terms of the notion of "the gap," this means that he believes that in participation there is more involved than mere doing. Marcel quite readily acknowledges that the self could never fulfill itself. With Sartre, he sees death as the ultimate sign of the fact that despair awaits the soul that would unite the "for-itself" with the "in-itself". Marcel points out that the freedom of nonbeing is "just an inexplicable" and "much more deeply unintelligible" than his own attempt to explain creative participation.[56] He believes in point of criticism that Sartre has illogically tied together idealism with "a materialism which derives from the eighteenth century tradition of French

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[53] PE, p.46.
[54] Cf. HV, p.16.
[55] Supra, note 18.
[56] PE, p.61.

thought."[57] Marcel's phenomenological analysis of being and having helps us to see that the gap between acting upon and being acted upon is often but a matter of bad semantics and of misplaced reason.

To overcome by creative or free affirmation of my situation is the conquest of *homo viator*. To the questions, "Am I free?" or "Are you free?" no univocal answer may be given.[58] In our current terms, freedom is always more or less present; it never achieves full autonomy from a certain element of having. We have already noted that freedom cannot be identified as an essential attribute of man. We cannot say he *is* or *was born* free. Freedom may rather be paradoxically related to what I *am* and to what I *am not*. "In other words, freedom is conquest--always partial, always precarious, always challenged."[59]

Freedom of selfhood is never *sum*; it is *sursum*. The self must go beyond itself. It accomplishes this by moving toward incarnation. Toward the end of his crucial essay on "The Ego and Its Relation to Others," Marcel says:

> What I have been trying to say is that the personality is only realised in the act by which it tends to become incarnate (in a book, for instance, or an action or in a complete life), but at the same time it is of its very essence never to fix itself or crystallise itself finally in this particular incarnation.[60]

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[57] PE, p.61.

[58] Therefore Ronald Grimsley's otherwise excellent exposition of Marcel's thought, *Existentialist Thought* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), p.210, is mistaken when he says: "We may say we are freedom and that we cannot have it." Marcel would not say unequivocally, "I am free," any more than he would say *simply*, "I am my body."

[59] EBHD, p.146.

[60] HV, p.26.

The last phase of that quotation explains why the "gap" in experience may move toward obliteration. The ego must become aware of the meaning of its incarnate--bodily--existence in the world. The distinction here to be made between Marcel and Sartre is this: Marcel sees man as more than his free act because he participates in a "pleroma" which anticipates him and toward which he moves; Sartre views man as caught up in his own free individuality with only the being which he has fixed by his own totally free choice.

One might ask who is the true existential thinker here. Certainly Sartre has made of the "being-in-a-situation" something which is new to the history of existentialism. Starting from an idealist construction of the self, he seems to have dismissed that reality in the purely physical act. Marcel adds to his rather loose charge of Sartre's "materialism,"[61] the more specific assertion that Sartre is an "epiphenominalist".[62] Marcel suggests that a possible key to Sartre's thought is the notion of "transphenomenality". This is not Kant's ding an sich. It appears to be the necessary existence of the object for consciousness beyond the scope of its mode of appearance. Marcel regards this as a "realistic attitude towards knowledge which actually tends to do away with any form of activity."[63] Marcel continues by arguing that there is a logical inconsistency in the opposition between the en-soi and the pour-soi, if we take Sartre's own terms: Briefly it is that the "gap" at the heart of the en-soi could only occur if "the en-soi effectively wills to be pour-soi" or if the

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[61] Supra, note 57.

[62] HV, p.179. Marcel goes on to qualify this to say that many forms of thought criss-cross in Sartre's work.

[63] HV, p.180.

"pour-soi itself somehow anticipates itself". The only possible solution Sartre admits is an "en-soi-cause-of-itself" but this is not really possible because a pour-soi by definition integrates itself en-soi and sinks below the level of future perspective. Marcel rightly sees that "if the pour-soi is anterior to itself" we are back to an idealism and it can only be wondered how an undifferentiated en-soi can produce a pour-soi. "It remains then to wonder if the hypothesis of a shock or cataclysm [gap] can be seriously considered." The only possible opening Marcel leaves Sartre is an "agnosticism" which says that this is the way man is free--by the "act of neantisation--and that is all we can say.[64]

Thus, for Sartre "I am my life." This does not deny the "going beyond" attitude of man, though Marcel's criticism of Sartre's epistemology seems to be logical; but it does make that transcendence a purely immanent thing--a thing-in-itself without transcendence. Marcel agrees that Sartre is describing something real for the life of man. His objection, beyond the logical contradiction, is that this is an expression of refusal of the transcendent which the facts in themselves do not warrant. For the free act to become more than a "useless passion" it "needs a help or inflowing which is nothing else but grace."[65] It may be, as Marcel suggests, that Sartre's realist epistemology does not allow for any symbiotic type of interpenetration between what, for want of better terms, we call the actor and the acted upon. But Marcel's real criticism is that such a program ends up by "setting up in front of us the image of an atrophied and contradictory world where the better part of ourselves is finally unable

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[64] HV, pp.179-183.

[65] HV, p.183. Grace is used here in the sense of gift, the technical sense which Marcel has clearly defined.

to recognise itself."[66]

For Marcel, in the light of freedom, man is sursum. This would be the same for Sartre if he admitted that the act created being. But for Sartre the act seems to fall into limbo, once it is completed. One must start all over again from the beginning. Marcel replies that there is a "certain solidarity between me and my act, as if we were both members of a certain inner community, a certain clan." He continues: "An act . . . is more an act to the degree that it is impossible to repudiate it without completely denying oneself."[67] Marcel attends to the fact of bodily existence as does Sartre; the difference lies in Marcel's refusal to view that existence as fixed in a final form by that act. Sartre, too, goes beyond this fixation, but it is to be wondered if it leads to more than anguish and uselessness.[68]

Freedom of the self may well be seen as personal destiny rather than as mere project. A project is something I merely have; a destiny is mine but beyond my grasp alone. The Sartrean project must turn out to be a stoical rigidity; a courageous, but ineffectual determination. Such a project is always in dire danger of fanaticism in order to maintain itself.[69] Marcel supplies an alternative consideration. "My freedom cannot fully affirm itself unless it embraces my personal destiny and does not claim merely to survey it."[70]

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[66] HV, p.183.

[67] CF, p.109.

[68] Cf. Ostermann, The Downside Review, op.cit., pp.396-398, for a similar interpretation.

[69] MEII, p.115.

[70] CF, p.31.

E. Ethical Freedom and the Other

Nietzsche said: "Truth begins with two." It is impossible for a hermit to be an ethical being. The notion of morality and immorality enters the picture only when interhuman contact exists. Moral freedom achieves whatever reality it has as a consequence of what Heidegger called mitsein.

Sartre would say that self-awareness is attained in concert with other-awareness.[71] Marcel himself admits this argument.[72] As Warnock says of Sartre's analysis, the problem of other minds does not present itself as a question since "at one and the same time as I am aware of myself, I necessarily become aware that other people exist and are observing me."[73] Marcel, too, sees a simultaneous emergence of what Sartre calls pour-en-soi and pour l'autrui. There is indeed a marked parallel between the way Marcel speaks of the other as mystery and the way Sartre apprehends the existence of the other. It defies the subject-object relation for both of them: For Marcel "we are" is a primary "global awareness" which is necessary to me.[74] For Sartre, it is the fact that the other transcends his mere objectivity by his own consciousness, a fact which gives a certain indefinable quality about our encounter.[75]

The differences appear immediately, however, The idealist categories remain dominant in Sartre. Thus, there is

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[71] B.M.G. Reardon, "The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel," Theology, Vol. LV (February, 1952), p.65.

[72] PE, p.49.

[73] Warnock, op.cit., p.74.

[74] Supra, notes 25 and 26 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".

[75] Cf. Warnock, loc.cit.

no reciprocity in the interpersonal for him, unless one can give that name to the centre of conflict. The inability of Sartre to think of encounter in any other terms than the either/or of actor or acted upon makes it impossible for him to escape the notion that the other must be overcome by my act or he will do the same to me by his act. Thus, being-for-others for Sartre is essentially conflict.[76] The alternatives within conflict are sadism or masochism.

The single escape from this dilemma seems to be indifference. This is to annul a relationship; to treat it as if it never happened, to treat it as if it were only a "happening". This explains the profound meaning of Marcel's assertion that for Sartre coincidence is superior to presence.[77] The only intercommunion that Marcel's nonparticipative philosophy allows is a sort of habitual simultaneity. For Sartre:

> The sense of community . . . is only experienced on such occasions as when a regiment is marching in step or a gang of workmen is pulling together, circumstances where the rhythm is in fact produced by myself and happens to coincide with that of the concrete community of which I am a member.[78]

A particularly revealin anticdote serves to support this finding. Marcel reports that he had in conversation scandalised Sartre's friends by saying that "Sartre's world is the world as seen from the terrace of a cafe'."[79] Later Sartre, in conversation with Roger Troisfontaines, affirmed that this statement was true. He explained that the "indifference" of

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[76] Ibid.
[77] PE, p.43.
[78] PE, p.53.
[79] PE, p.41.

the cafe' was the feature he sought.[80] Certainly this fits with Sartre's analysis of freedom as an isolated autonomy. The separation between self and others can only be overcome then for Sartre by clothing oneself in indifferent anonymity and awaiting without hope the concerted action of the group. (The practical difficulties of this must be considered later.) True encounter is philosophically impossible and consequently ethically insincere.

As Wilfred Desan says in a comparison of Sartre and Marcel, the choice is plain: Either "Hell is other people" or "The other is not the Enemy but the Savior."[81] What we have tried to indicate is that the choice is basically an ethical matter but that it is significantly rooted in the respective ontologies of these two philosophers who agree that ethical consequences are implicit in their philosophical positions.

To further explicate this we return to the notion of freedom. Marcel has asserted, in more than an alliterative decoration, that "freedom is fraternal."[82] Freedom and intersubjectivity are inextricably bound together.[83] Sartre on the other hand, sees the other person as the dead-end of my free project, the "no exit" sign no matter which way I try to turn. Possibly this can be explicated by concrete examples.

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[80] PE, p.42.

[81] Wilfred Desan, The Tragic Finale: An Essay on the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p.188.

[82] EBHD, p.147.

[83] MAH, p.17.

In the discussion of freedom we have already considered the Sartrean contention that gifts are designed to obligate the other, to negate his freedom. For Sartre this is even more apparent the more intimate the relation becomes. Love is appropriation rather than communion. This position is based on the fact that relation may have no reciprocity. "A being who is free is bound to deny that he has received anything."[84] Based on Sartre's own admissions, Marcel's claim that "the family must represent for Sartre that viscous element which he particularly dislikes."[85] For in the family the person is obliged to act out his role all the time or he is accused by the onlooker of shirking his duty, i.e., "the man next door is a lazy bum! Its his duty as head of the house to keep the garden tidy but see how overgrown with weeds it is." The man is under judgement because he is failing to do what he is.

Marcel is equally disapproving of this obligatory way of life. He refers to the man who fulfills his being as a poseur. He seems to be interested in others but his occupation is really with himself. The man who directs his life and that of his family for the sake of his "image" in the eyes of others is under the compulsion of what Marcel would call a "moral egocentricity". His being is made up of these acts which fill out this fixed image of himself and his family. The family have been appropriated for the self-aggrandisement of this household head. He has indeed become a threat to their freedom; he is well on the way to destroying his own.[86] Since Sartre sees the aim of love as appropriation (having),

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[84] PE, p.60.

[85] PE, p.42.

[86] Cf. PE, p.42 for the foundation of these remarks.

it is not strange that the climax of success in this endeavor is at the same time the realisation of failure. The game is over; love is dead through the assimilation of the other into a rigid frame of personal reference.

Marcel sees this as the most severe form of nihilism. The aim of love is surely "communion". This Sartrean doctrine of appropriation with its devastating consequences for intimate relationships gains its feasibility from the application of an "exaggerated concept of negation".[87] Marcel teaches that to put a certain distance between oneself and the other, for example, is not necessarily to deny him, even as to move toward him is not necessarily to encompass him. The wealthy father who believes that his son is in danger of falling into financial dependence on him and sends him out to do hard labour for a summer, may recognise that a certain disengagement is necessary for a healthy attachment. This is indicative of the fact that there is a difference between role-playing and living for the mutual enhancement of a relationship. Here it is not the act itself, especially seen in an external sense, that can be isolated from the motive involved. To return to our previous example, while it may appear to the neighbors that the father is shirking his duty by leaving the garden untidy, it may be that the father, seeing that his son lacks sufficient traits of initiative and responsibility, is providing an opportunity for these to grow through this strong hint. The danger of appropriation by attempting to shape the personality of the son is immediately apparent. All Marcel seeks to say at this point is that experience does seem to show that there are parents who seek to guide without forcing--who seek to communicate but not appropriate. Murchland comments

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[87] PE, p.59.

on our point: "These unobjective relations are creative, for through them I create myself and help another to create his own freedom."[88] Or as Stallknecht says: The father's freedom towards his children "does not commit him to any predictable type of behavior" but rather calls for "unending concern for their well-being and enlightenment".[89]

The problem for Sartre is that he is unable to see the inner dimension of the relationship, or rather he sees that dimension as either futile or in bad faith. The person is frozen by the stare of the other into a photographed essence. One of Marcel's clear-cut ethical notions is that one cannot finally judge another. In other words, one may transcend his act even under the close gaze of another. My act does not freeze me in a position; it helps to create what I am becoming in one direction or another. For Sartre the other is as he sees him; for Marcel the other overlaps my gaze on every side. The meaning of this for ethics is that whatever criterion is recognised it must not overlook the inner meaning of the act. This is not to make the weak distinction between motive and act; it is to admit that a true ethical goal must seek to move beyond these subject-object categories to the notion of mutuality of human enhancement.

These comments bring us to consider the ethical implications of the intersubjective relation. We have already said that ethics only becomes a subject for our consideration when the human encounter is possible. The question of whether the other person then serves to open or close my road to

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[88] Op.cit., p.343.

[89] Op.cit., p.666.

freedom has caught our attention. We can at least claim in answer to the second question that experience does not seem to give any more weight to Sartre's case than to Marcel's. It appears that Marcel's examples carry as much weight as do Sartre's analyses. This would lead us to believe that Marcel's freedom may be largely based on the initial attitude one takes towards the other.

This may be explained by returning to the notion of role-playing. It is at this point that Marcel speaks of "transmutation". It is akin to "creative receptivity". A gift which is an act of love acquires the quality of my "being-for-another". This has an existential quality. To have a small child come to you, for example, with a handful of bedraggled dandelions he has picked by the wayside places this matter in focus. He expects you to admire them, to recognise their value on his behalf. If you should disregard his efforts by carelessly receiving them or by failing to give expression to your delight, you may be guilty of "a sin against love".[90]

The illustration may be a bit sentimental and the religious overtones too pronounced, but the point is made. Marcel considers that it is just possible to view all of life as such an opportunity for receptivity. His contention is that one who creatively receives a gift of love is enhanced by "an accretion of being". Externally he may not be the least bit more advanced. But, in reply to Sartre, Marcel does not claim to have proved the point. He admits that his open attitude can be questioned. He characteristically admits that there seem to be "souls" incapable of such response to

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[90]Cf. PE, pp.74-75.

the other.[91] He does contend that his reflections show that the refusal is based more on a passionate resentment than on a rational accounting of the facts.[92]

Marcel is not sanguine about laying down ethical principles. One commentator has suggested, with deliberate reservations, that moral freedom for Marcel coincides with the Kantian norm that all people should be treated as ends in themselves.[93] Though Marcel might not object to this, he does not characteristically speak in such terms. What is certain is that the ethical question only arises in encounter with others. In contrast to Sartre, this is also the point where freedom is accessible to us. "The fraternal man is linked to his neighbor, but in such a way that this tie not only does not fetter him, but frees him from himself."[94] It is in this moral act in relation to the other that the "gap" within the agent is overcome. If Sartre says that moral freedom is acting upon what I am, Marcel might well reply that in such an act I "make myself what I am to be."[95]

This transcendence of any fixed essence is in part because I have opened myself to the activity of the other. If the activity of the other is overt persecution of me, I resist as a member of a community supporting me in my hour of crisis. A man under torture to commit treason is making of himself what he will be. If he resists it is not so much

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[91] Marcel's interesting contention is that this is a characteristic of a broken world.

[92] Cf. PE, pp.74-76 for the basis of this paragraph.

[93] Roberts, op.cit., p.318.

[94] EBHD, p.147. Underlining mine.

[95] Roberts, loc.cit.

that "he attaches tremendous value to freedom itself," as Roberts suggests,[96] but rather he realises his freedom as an inner quality that has been granted to him in the community of which he is a vital part. His being has been granted "ontological weight".

It could be replied that resistance is just as likely on the part of the man who pridefully says to himself, "I'm too tough to crack." But in point of fact, such an attitude becomes absurd, when disconnected from a "cloud of witnesses".[97] We need not conclude that this attitude is the least desirable in such a situation to suggest that it is not the best. For in addition to the absurdity of totally isolated resistance, the practical issue arises. Is it not true that prisoners of war have often testified that it was a "presence" outside themselves that kept their spirits alive? Marcel has not always made his position on the matter of the will entirely clear, but it is true to say that for him positive attachment is of greater significance than the stiffened will. As a matter of fact, there is something puzzling when Sartre says that the French people were never so free as when they were occupied by the German forces during World War II. If freedom always is or is not, then all he can mean is that there were more free individuals then than at any other time. But Sartre does not give sufficient attention to the fact that this resistance included an increased attachment to the values threatened with destruction. As a purely practical matter, it is to be wondered whether the stiffening of the will is in such circumstances not a weak substitute for an appeal to

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[96] Ibid.

[97] For Marcel, these witnesses would not necessarily have to be on the hither side of death. It is "presence" that counts.

fellow sufferers. At least Marcel indicates that the resources present in what I have with which to resist are vastly inferior to a quality of being which comes to me when I make myself available. Though it must be emphasized that in "le monde cassé" such hopes are often dashed by others who have seemingly been rendered incapable of interhuman response.[98]

In Albert Camus' series of short stories, Exile and the Kingdom,[99] Janine, the central figure in the story, "The Adulterous Woman," looks out over the darkened city and thinks of her husband, Marcel, with whom she has lived for twenty-five years. She thinks to herself:

> She liked being loved, and he had showered her with attentions. By so often making her aware that she existed for him he made her exist in reality. No she was not alone . . .[100]

Such reflection led her to moral activity. Camus' Janine is a moral person in Marcel's sense of the word because she creates herself on the basis of a free spiritual attachment. Her morality is created from the freedom experienced through her husband; she is far from infidelity, even in the midst of temptation.

The basis of morality here is not inner rigidity to a fixed image of myself or outward conformity to a set of rules. It is recognising the marriage relationship, in this case, as primarily a being rather than a having situation. Janine refuses even in her meditative analysis to detach

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[98] Heinemann, op.cit., p.146, is wrong to say that Marcel substitutes je crois for Descartes je pense.

[99] Exile and the Kingdom: Stories by Albert Camus, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1958).

[100] Ibid.,p.11. Underlining mine.

herself into a kingdom apart from her husband, Marcel. Rather the presence of her husband is allowed to act upon her in a creative fashion. Some words of Mounier are appropriate to the point:

> The presence of another-person, instead of petrifying me, appears, in the contrary, to be a beneficent influence, and undoubtedly a source of regeneration and creativeness.[101]

Our discussion leads us to say that Sartre's hope of escaping the plight of individualistic, and thus only relative, morality is small. It can only occur in the coincidental action of myself with myself or of myself with others. The real question is not only whether Marcel's analysis is more hopeful, but whether it comes closer to stating the truth of the case. It is at this point that Marcel makes a sharp attack upon Sartre which is both a moral indictment and a point relevant to the status of people in community.

Marcel says:

> The essential question is, to my mind, whether this philosophy is not heading for the abyss into which the forces of self-destruction threaten to drive our unfortunate race. For my part, I am convinced of it . . .[102]

But is this the "essential" question? Is it not the question of truth, no matter what the consequences, which is the issue? In answer to this Marcel would simply remind us that truth--specific moral rights and wrongs--are not <u>a priori</u> given in each situation. Truth is a value known in the world of personal relations. It cannot be detached from the consequences its promulgation incurs. One cannot define truth itself; all one can hope to do in philosophy is to give a "phenomenological description of the spirit of truth".[103] This description

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[101] <u>Op.cit.</u>, p.84.

[102] PE, p.62.

[103] HV, p.140.

"identifies itself with the spirit of fidelity and love."[104] When Marcel speaks of truth in the Gifford Lectures it is not of a "thing," of a "veritas est adequatio rei et intellectus" which we can grasp (have), but in terms of a "conversation" which is carried on where truth is both the motivation and the consequence.[105]

Marcel's point is this: "It is inadmissible to isolate a judgement and then look for the truth in connection with this judgement."[106] If this is true, and it certainly conforms to most existential thought, then the interhuman consequences of his form of adherance to Descartes' Cogito or the Kantian notion of the passive recepticles of human consciousness. It is all of the same piece of thought; Sartre's ethics are integral to his philosophy. Thus, Marcel says, without demeaning the brilliance of Sartre's intelligence, that Sartre's "cramping of the spirit to the experience of the senses" corresponds exactly to the "devaluation of the truly human modes of existence".[107] Writing at the height of Sartre's popularity, Marcel notes that "misdirected and anarchical youth" will become his "disciples and . . . victims".[108] This may or may not be a fair allegation concerning Sartre. For our purposes, however, it indicates Marcel's insistence that the ethical act, the personal agent and the people it influences are all one. Truth must take all these into consideration.

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[104] HV, p.152.

[105] MBI, pp.ix-x. This expository table of contents was not written by Marcel. It may have been done by G.S. Fraser, the translator, or by someone else, as has been suggested by another writer.

[106] MBI, p.x.

[107] PE, p.65.

[108] PE, p.65.

A moral act is that which contributes to the mutual enhancement of personal being for all concerned. The fact that we are often doubtful about how this may be achieved in a particular situation is the plight of "le monde cassé". This dilemma, both Sartre and Marcel would agree, may act as a stimulus to renewed investigation.

F. Ethical Freedom in the World

Like an Indian rubber ball tossed on the turf, man seems to have been thrown into this world. He awakes to this fact through jarring contact with the external world. With a sense of dizziness he recognises his capacity to orientate the direction in which his initial bounce takes him. This fundamental orientation seems to be based on an inner moment of affirmation or refusal. This choice does not appear chronologically at the dawning of psychological consciousness, but rather at the junction in the way, where ethical decisions are made. Does my existence have an original orientation with which I may align myself or have I been tossed carelessly into this situation?

Notice that the question does not seem to be orientation or not; we seem destined to choose by the fact of our conscious being-in-the-world. This is a correct and nonpejorative way of understanding condemnation to freedom. Man cannot escape the weight of "ultimate concern". The real question is the direction of our original orientation. But to answer this question we seem to be helplessly in the dark. Is our answer to be faith, unbelief, for agnosticism?[109] Is there any clue to be found in the starry sky above us or in the mundane situation we inhabit? Existential thought, including

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[109] I think Marcel would argue that even agnosticism has either an open or a close orientation.

Marcel's reflections, has emphasized the difficulty in finding such a clue. Troisfontaines says: "Experience does not decide between the different choices: It depends on them."[110] Though I hesitate to argue against Marcel's confidant on this point, it is clear that Marcel's whole philosophical endeavor has itself been an orientation which has sought to point the way, though not necessarily to demonstrate, that if we can develop a perceptive ear to the echoes resounding through our situation, the clues we seek may be forth coming. The answer is where we are. Marcel has quoted with approval these semi-poetic word from Gustave Thibon:

> 'You feel you are hedged in; you dream of escape; but beware of mirages. Do not run or fly away in order to get free: rather dig in the narrow place which has been given you; you will find God there and everything. God does not float on your horizon, he sleeps in your substance. Vanity runs, love digs. If you fly away from yourself, your prison will run with you and will close in because of the wind of your flight; if you go deep down into yourself it will disappear in paradise.'[111]

Is there then a hint as to whether our freedom which we assume is a gift or a condemnation? The answer to that question seems to rest in the realisation of freedom itself. Though both Marcel and Sartre agree that human freedom is *au monde*, it is Marcel's intention to show that human freedom, and thus the ethical meaning and dignity of man, is increased by an affirmative or open orientation. This is to affirm our so-called condemnation; it is to affirm our being. Marcel seeks to show that such an orientation need not be closed or rigid. In that case it would be little improvement over the grasping movement of the negative approach. It is here that being as a certain open orientation shuns the various forms

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[110] *Existentialism and Christian Thought*, *op.cit.*, p.41.

[111] HV, p.28. Source unknown. Underlining mine.

of escape in order to realise freedom for Marcel. "The opposition between a philosophy of being and a philosophy of freedom cannot be maintained."[112] This point, if acceptable, would serve to indicate that the divergence between the orientations of Marcel and Sartre may not simply be a matter of arbitrary choice. Roberts asks: "Must we simply make a choice between two conceptions, neither of which can claim to be more true than the other?"[113] His reply to the question, he thinks, as I do, fits Marcel's approach: "If we adopt the atheistic alternative we soon discover that the term 'truth' has lost its significance and so has freedom."[114]

But this ought not to offer any solace to the Thomists, for example, or even to neo-Thomists such as Jacques Maritain. The notions of freedom and truth which Marcel holds are, at least in terms of their objective accessibility, much closer to Sartre than to them. Sartre cannot be logically disengaged from his position. Roberts is correct when he says that one needs to arouse Sartre's good-wil more than his logic and that he will not allow because of his fundamental orientation.[115] Freedom for Marcel is accepted and blessed; for Sartre it is accepted and cursed. For Marcel the meaning of the mystery of being is that this dilemma is unresolvable according to logical modes of thought, but that in a participative attachment in our situation by thought and act we may discover a freedom not to be naturally expected.

This position is based on the taking of experience as a whole. Certainly this in itself is not opposed to Sartre.

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[112] Cf. MBII, pp.108-124.
[113] Op.cit., p.319.
[114] Ibid., p.320.
[115] Ibid., p.320.

There is remarkable parallel between their common view of man in the world. Both require a concrete approach. Both distinguish between authentic and inauthentic freedom. Both agree that we ought to exercise freedom and make decisions; we are free to choose and responsible towards others in these decisions. They hold, in fact, a "common description of man in the world."[116]

Marcel, like Sartre, would regard freedom has having reality in the world, at the personal level, and in an intentional situation.[117] Yet the fact remains that Sartre negates the situation as nauseous and absurd, while Marcel affirms it in what amounts to a rising crescendo of praise. While Marcel feels a certain "nuptual bond" with his situation in the world, Sartre emphasizes the absurd gap between himself and the world he did not choose originally but now must choose derivatively. This gap between human knowing and being is expressed in both approaches, but it is overcome in Marcel by a participative bond and by Sartre in blind decision.

Possibly this can be illuminated by noticing the factual situation.[118] Does my life have a "plot" or "theme," or am I just a bit actor which the director drives on and off the stage. The very fact that I am not even given a rough outline of the play, let alone a full manuscript, may well

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[116] Cf. these comparisons in John Cruickshank, "Existentialism After Twelve Years: An Evaluation," The Dublin Review, Vol.231 (Summer, 1957), p.637.

[117] Marcel wrote of "participation" in this vein, and originally, as early as 1913. Sartre is indebted to Heidegger for much of his analysis here, though he gives it an original construction.

[118] Sartre considers my past, place, body, position and fundamental relation to the other, in Being and Nothingness. Marcel deals with all of these issues but not in any systematic fashion.

cause me to ask questions: Is there a producer of this drama? Even if there is, does it make any real difference to its enactment? If there is not, can I give any meaning of my own to it?

But as long as such questions reign supreme I remain external to my situation; I deny the possibility of a modus vivendi with its hazards. Marcel suggests, not intending to make the "act versus thought" dichotomy, that "consecration" to a cause or idea is a low, but significant, level where we begin to see our way through this dilemma. Such a commitment for Sartre could only be an external and accidental sort of participation. But Marcel shows that when I enter into it beyond the level of having it is then that I note the "bursting of my life into flower".[119] Here freedom takes on a necessary or inner quality; this Marcel might call "liberté d' engagement".

This does not yet answer the ethical question concerning truth. Participation in a cause has often meant human degradation that is almost universally condemned. We must return to the criterion of that which mutually enhances the being and well-being of the human participants. Is there a participation which tends to enhance freedom and human dignity in the world? Marcel suggests that there is, and as we have noticed, his strongest statements about Sartre's philosophy assert, a clear tendency to "villify" such inner qualities.[120]

Participation must be an active reception of the elements of my existence. This includes an openness to the possibility of vertical transcendence. It is just such receptivity Sartre opposes vehemently. In his drama, The Devil and God, a German cavalry officer of the sixteenth

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[119] MBI, p.174.

[120] Marcel says somewhere that the only middle-class virtue Sartre respects is "courage".

century, named Goetz, lives first as a saint and later as an ascetic mystic, in an alleged attempt to discover religious meaning. In the end he rejoices in the complete nothingness he has found. It would appear that Goetz represents Sartre's position to a large extent. But it is clear that Goetz is not trying to contribute anything to his situation; rather he is attempting to gain for himself all he can wring out of life. His hands are shaped like grasping tentacles rather than the clasped, uplifted hands of appeal. His effort is to "have" rather than to "be".

In contrast, the figure, Werner Schnee, a German singer brought to life in Marcel's 1936 play, Le Dard, presents himself. His affirmation of life is significant; First, as a "gesture of solidarity," he flees Nazi Germany with his Jewish accompanist, Rudolf Schonthal. Secondly, after the death of the pianist, he decides to return to Germany, though he is quite certain he will be made a political prisoner. His intention is to use his musical talent to comfort the political prisoners with whom he will mingle. Thirdly, in the midst of this decision, Rudolf remains a "living presence" to him. He says to Beatrice, wife of his French friend, Professor Eustache Soreau; "If there were only the living, I think life on this earth would be quite impossible." Fourthly, realising his growing affection for Beatrice, his intention to return to Germany with all its hazards is intensified; he will not dissipate whatever intersubjectivity yet remains between Eustache and himself. He even encourages Beatrice to attempt to open herself to reconciliation of the estranged relationship between herself and Eustache. If all this sounds unnatural, Marcel would probably agree. Not many of Marcel's characters reach such heights of participation in their existence. It points us to the not exclusively religious affirmation

that "salvation comes from transcendence."[121] In our current terms, this implies that the content of ethical decision arises from participation in being. Such a statement gives us no final answers. No certain formula comes to mind. The content may not always be the same. Marcel admits that "transcendence . . . takes on very different aspects."[122] But it is his endeavor to indicate how this transcendence is related to a certain "universality". It is this relation that holds our attention.

The distinction is between refusal and admiration, between despair and hope. Goetz attempt at transcendence is at best an "as if".[123] Werner Schnee, on the other hand, transcends the gap between his life and himself by a real participation in his hazardous situation.

This notion of participation seeks to eliminate several false alternatives on the notion of freedom. There are certain areas where we should not expect to find freedom: (1)It is not something I will, as when I decide to obstruct a desire in order to achieve another purpose. Such a stoical attitude may just as easily be a new form of bondage. Such a characteristic is often found among those we can cautiously identify as "ideologists". (2)Freedom is not the single alternative to determinism. Freedom lies on a recreative level

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[121] Cf. EBHD, pp.116-117.

[122] EBHD, pp.125-126.

[123] It is significant that when Goetz attempts to distribute goods as a saint the peasants are suspicious and when he lives as an ascetic mystic he simultaneously lives with a woman and has her whip him in masochistic fashion. Thus, it seems that Sartre himself has mauvaise foi about this attempt at righteous living; cf. Troisfontaines, "What is Existentialism?" op.cit., pp.526-527.

beyond that of cause and effect. That is, it cannot be seen as an option on the same plane as deterministic influences. (3)Neither is freedom merely the realm of indetermination. Marcel does not mean "mystery" in this mysterious sense. Freedom is not the locus of insignificant gaps left after cause-and-effect have had their day. No new science of physical relativity can by its authority renew the possibility and meaning of what is meant by freedom. Freedom does not await the physicists calculations for a reprieve from its death sentence. Freedom is "not essentially liberty of choice," in other words. (4)Freedom cannot be viewed properly, either, as the esse of man. Freedom is not an attribute of man, as a Cartesian faculty. It is not that weight which finally balances the scales towards indeterminism. Do we not often awaken to the fact that we have been a pawn in the hands of skilled or blind forces? Man must look elsewhere for his essential being than in the having of freedom.[124]

We may say that freedom is liberation by participation. "That which I affirm is different because I affirm it."[125] My affirmation of my situation is creative in that it reveals certain aspects not before noticed. Note that this is neither production nor creation ex nihilo. Freedom is a certain positive perspective which actually changes the horizon of decision. This is really to say that freedom is not something which I have, nor is it something which I am, in any pure sense of that term.

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[124]These four points are an elaboration of material in MBII, pp.108-113.

[125]Sanborn, op.cit., p.78. I think that the term "because" is not the best here. What is meant is a certain reciprocity. Sanborn is here making a good attempt, however, to state Marcel's position.

Thus, freedom is won by affirmation of my situation. But this conquest must always be seen as partial, precarious and challenged. We can never be sure of our freedom, as Marcel sees it, while for Sartre it is the next thing to inevitable.

Marcel explains how this conquest is made. A man becomes increasingly free as he is able "to give his existence the richest significance, or stake the most on it."[126] This means to become aware of one's "nuptual bond" with the world in the midst of "the broken world". One must become aware that he belongs. In Ralph Harper's, The Sleeping Beauty, an interpretation of the fairy tale based on Marcel's philosophy, there is a profound description of this "at-home-ness". He quotes from one of Heidegger's favorite poems by Hölderlin, titled Homecoming. "The nearer we get to grasping the heart of something, the sense of reality, the more ineffable what we see or feel."[127] We should recall at this point the simultaneity with which Marcel views the familiar and the transcendent. It is something like a "distant glimpsed prospect" felt to be "intimately near to us"; it is a certain "inner distance" like a "lost homeland to the exile".[128] Harper translates this in terms of a sort of nostolgia: "We want only that freshness that is ever familiar, that familiarity that is ever new."[129] Harper tells of a man who with his wife returned to a place where he had been a student. The familiar surroundings interested him at first, but he soon became bored. "He

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[126] I regard that as a startling and important statement from EBHD, p.147.

[127] Op.cit., p.80. Supra, note 66 in chapter VII.

[128] Cf. MBI, pp.192-193.

[129] Harper, op.cit., p.97.

concluded that the familiar is a bore unless it is capable of movement."[130] His return to this place was a disappointment because he had not returned to a presence given him by nostolgia, but "to the reality which in the present he was still incapable of experiencing as presence."[131] In Augustinian terms, "We do not say that we have found what we have lost unless we recognize it."[132]

Interpreted, this means that the affirmation of my situation in the world is itself a going beyond the world in its literal presence. Harper puts it this way:

> Only in the piety which both fondles natural things and at the same time looks beyond nature for that principle of fulness which nature and humanity attest to, only in man's quest for fulness will the human emptiness and drabness be transfigured.[133]

In other words, the condition of situated having is necessary for the possibility of freedom's emergence. That possibility comes alive when I affirm my situation or "stake my life on it". This is my way of saying that the situation contains in its womb my salvation and the salvation of those involved with me. This having may include the fact that my father is a Protestant minister and that consequently I was raised in the environs of the manse. The fact that I too have chosen to be a Protestant minister, is that solely predetermined by my environment? Who can say for sure? Neither myself nor anybody else can judge with absolute certainty. The assurance of freedom would no more be established, however, if I had

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[130] Ibid., p.100.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid., p.118. Marcel would say just as quickly that our sense of exigence towards transcendence is itself a recognition of something which is ours but strangely absent.

[133] Ibid., p.43.

chosen to operate a gaming house. Revolt is no more a sign of freedom than is adherance to the traditional environment a sign of rigid conformity. Freedom arises out of that which I make out of what I may, with a certain relaxation, admit was largely chosen for me. It is only such a course that enables us to achieve a vantage point where we may look back in judgement on the matter of our personal freedom.

Such an affirmation is what Marcel refers to as "bearing witness" in a situation. I am through my memory (a factor which Marcel suggests somewhere in his writing as an "ontological sign") a witness to my own affirmations. This is a factor which Sartre seems to leave out. Each decision is made as if nothing had gone before.[134] Even in the case of the Sartrean project, there is nothing to prevent that project crumbling in mid-course without arousing any ethical problem. But the problem remains. As Platinga has said of the Sartrean project:

> If my moral standards are defined by my fundamental choice, and if in acting inconsistently with these standards I am simply making another fundamental choice, then any action or choice is morally correct by definition.[135]

But for Marcel freedom in ethical decision involves a belonging which enhances being. It involves a recognition that my history must be affirmed but only in such a way that I move towards freedom within it without seeking to escape it. Thus, we may contrast what Mounier calls "pure resurgence" in Sartre with the "witness in a situation" of Marcel. Mounier says:

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[134] Recall the notecase incident. Supra, note 48 in chapter XI.

[135] Alvin Platinga, "An Existentialist's Ethics," The Review of Metaphysics, Vol.XII (December, 1958), p.249.

> If a bearing witness lies at the heart of decision, my freedom no longer represents pure resurgence and I am the witness to it just as much as the author of it.[136]

Sartre must then be accused of error in advocating a freedom of creation ex nihilo. Marcel rather "regards action as a state of tension between a creative superabundance and a purifying reflexion."[137] In our terms Marcel sees freedom as a reciprocal creation, an interaction between being and the ethical individual who is open to that which is more than his life. Marcel allows that there is a sort of freedom in Sartre's position of refusal.[138] But he believes that such a position is itself a betrayal of the converging elements in the situation.[139] He even asserts that such a refusal finally makes freedom "evanescent," since it is on the one hand a "suicidal wish" or on the other the enthronement of false saviour of a political ideology.[140] For Marcel, I am ethically free only as long as I belong to my situation and I belong to my situation only in maintaining a certain creative distance between my being and it. Freedom for ethical decision involves primarily a creative belonging. If we translated the term "authority" into "situation" in the following statement (a perfectly legitimate transfer in terms of meaning) Karl Jaspers will be seen to make the same point as Marcel.

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[136] Mounier, op.cit., p.105.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Cf. MAH, p.14, where he allows the "theoretical possibility".

[139] Cf. CF, p.101.

[140] MAH, p.14. This is a sort of biographical statement on Sartre's progress, I believe.

We must

> remain beyond the bounds of time and history, at every moment in our lives, truly and indirectly in touch with the duty through living a life of love. We must not commit ourselves entirely to history, but partake of the eternity of the present through a genuine experience of the tension between freedom and authority.[141]

Marcel is able to translate this theory of creative belonging into the social sphere. In the context of considering "lost liberties" in France, he asks why Holland and Belgium survived World War II with a greater sense of freedom. He replies that it is largely explained by the maintenance of a certain open having: Holland has preserved a "strong continuing religious sentiment"; she has a small territory giving her a sense of intimacy for the whole of the country; she has an attitude of admiration for the royal family; and she did not experience a puppet regime, such as the Vichy period in France, where it was forgotten how closely connected is the "lie" to "servitude".[142]

Freedom then may express itself in affirmation or denial. But it is only when it "incarnates itself" that it develops an inner "logic" or strength of responsive perpetuation. It gains the power of self understanding by this action of witnessing to its own environment. That self-understanding of the free person speaks obliquely, but with increasing clarity, of the vertical transcendence at the heart of its being.[143] In the affirmative witness in our situation "we can confirm the fact that our freedom is implied in the awareness of our participation in the universe."[144]

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[141] Karl Jaspers, "Freedom and Authority," Diogenes, Vol.1 (1952), p.42.

[142] Cf. MAH, pp.24-26.

[143] Cf. CF, p.26.

[144] CF, p.23.

Such a notion of freedom opens up the way for an "ethics of participation". It is Louis Pamplume who suggests that fruitful phrase. He explains that such freedom enables us to give meaning to a situation or to a vocation within that situation--a meaning "not objectively inherent in these experiences" but appearing by virtue of our involvement at a positive level. "It is through a creative interpretation that we are able to give life the countenance of destiny."[145]

Freedom for Marcel extends into the mysterious relation between act and social environment. For Sartre, on the other hand, freedom is the concommitant of choice. Marcel says that for Sartre: "Being, in the case of human beings, is equivalent to doing."[146] Possibly a comparison of an unpublished Marcellian drama and a noted Sartrean novel will make the distinction finally apparent.

In April or May of 1918, Marcel began to write a drama which he never finished or published. It was to be titled, "Un Juste". Briefly the plot was as follows: During the first World War a French soldier, François Lecuyer, comes home on leave. He meets the civilians in all their differing moods, but refuses to question himself about the meaning, duration and aftermath of the war. Raymond, his brother who has been exempted from military service on medical grounds, cannot avoid these silent questions. Raymond's friend, Bernard Groult, another soldier home on leave, speaks with him. Bernard, believing he will not return from war again, voices his doubts about the war. François listens only momentarily as Bernard in anguish attacks the docile conformism of French public opinion and the criminality of a Europe that had spawned

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[145] Pamplume, op.cit., p.95. Underlining mine.

[146] PE, p.58.

the German monster. Bernard can see nothing but a divided Europe as the result of the war. A meaningful victory seems out of reach to him. Raymond admits that he too has been caught in this dilemma when he had written letters to the front: He feared both to discourage the morale of the soldier and to feed the fires of patriotic fanaticism. Bernard's nonconformist confessions find response in the already questioning mind of Raymond. The play, unfinished, would probably have closed by Raymond joining a pacifist organisation but then reopening the debate or killing himself in the face of the ambiguous situation.

This story is close to Marcel's life. His only reflections on fidelity were begun here. Raymond epitomises certain of his attitudes, a feature not common in Marcel's drama. Marcel admits that he experienced two emotions which triggered this drama: First, "a feeling of inferiority which bordered on shame" in that his medical record freed him from armed service. Second, horror when he learned that certain pacifist pamphlets written by a fellow philosopher had been instrumental in touching off mutinies which resulted in the death of these French soldiers before their own firing squad. Raymond faces this exact dilemma in the drama and he is unable to achieve a satisfactory answer. The only clue to a resolution of the problem is offered in the words of the soldier, Bernard:

> I can express freely and with certainty the complete horror which this war inspires in me only because I have accepted once and for all my share of whatever atrocities the war may bring upon me.[147]

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[147] EBHD, p.59. This information about the drama, and Marcel's opinions on it, comes from EBHD, pp.54-64.

Of this drama Marcel says two important things: One, "The essential aspect of the case for me lay in the initial tie between Bernard and Raymond."[148] He describes this as a question which "belongs to the realm of ethics".[149] The question: "Whether Bernard does or does not have the right to pronounce before another person a judgement which is going to have a profound effect upon that person's conduct."[150] Second, this dilemma "anticipates an existential way of thinking" which Sartre, "in a direction quite different from mine," later developed into systematic form.[151]

The key words of Bernard provide the basis for insight into Marcel's position. The importance of these words is confirmed by Marcel.[152] Thus, Marcel can say: "What justifies . . . the articulation of that judgment . . . is a certain value which is itself existential."[153] This "existential value" is discovered in the "situation in which the person who states it is placed."[154] Marcel later referred to this "existential value" as the "ontological weight" which is more than the "content" of a statement.[155] On this basis, he states that Sartre's "death of God" statement before newsmen in Geneva has little of the authenticity of Nietzsche's "terrible affirmation," in private.[156]

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[148] EBHD, p.60.
[149] EBHD, p.63.
[150] EBHD, p.63.
[151] EBHD, p.63.
[152] EBHD, p.63.
[153] EBHD, p.63.
[154] EBHD, p.63.
[155] EBHD, p.63.
[156] EBHD, pp.63-64; supra, note 129 in chapter on "Recreative Fidelity".

What emerges from this dramatic encounter? An ethics of recreative participation. It is absolute participation which brings about a position of freedom. Here having is merged into being. Being will only emerge out of the recreative response one makes to the situation. The situation, which seems to massively curtail freedom, actually becomes the frame of reference out of which freedom can arise. That set of circumstances which threatens to put a person in bondage actually becomes the springboard for the enhancement of freedom. Freedom for Bernard is not the arbitrary choice to "speak up" or "shut up"; it is rather his responsible response to the totality of the existential position which is his own. This role, which he must assume, is created out of the past and present which he is. In Bernard's case, the assurance that his legitimate role is the "speak up" is given to him as a free gift on the basis of his "acceptance of complete sacrifice".[157] In other words, this having of an ethical judgement--to openly criticise a certain war--does not enslave Bernard, because he has committed his being ahead of the judgement. Marcel concludes that for Bernard, and even more for Raymond, the animating influence is the desire to be manifestly faithful, whether or not this is seen from outside as conformity to ethical practice. Marcel's point is well made. Freedom appears when my act involves personal commitment to the worst consequences imaginable growing out of that act. Marcel would claim for this example that such existential commitment makes freedom a possibility for the person involved.

What Marcel does not claim is equally significant. He does not claim that this commitment brings forth wise or moral decision.[158] Raymond remains tragically undecided.

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[157] EBHD, p.59.

[158] EBHD, p.63.

Sartre would seem to be suggesting in some of his work, that freedom is equivalent to a moral decision.

Marcel is willing to acknowledge a large degree of freedom to the act which he regards as immoral.[159] But he would doubt seriously if this commitment can be maintained on a free level without becoming daemonic, and thus unfree.[160] The question which remains to be answered, in the effortto move past an individualistic ethic is whether the free individual can discover in his situation certain values which make his decision more than arbitrary. If so this would mean that the possibility of freedom lies at a deeper level than the act itself.

To return to Sartre, we find an interesting comparison in the novel, Le Sursis. Mathieu walks along the river Seine. In startling words Sartre describes his utter indifference to all that happens. Mathieu feels his looseness, his exile, his nothingness in the world. It occurs to him to throw himself into the Seine and end it all. His decision not to do so is as much without reason as the initial impulse to commit suicide:

> All at once he decided against it. He decided that it had been only a test. He found himself standing upright, walking, slipping on the crust of a dead planet. It would be for another time.[161]

We should note some things about this situation. First, Mathieu is faced with what most would describe as an ethical problem. But the question of right and wrong does not appear.

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[159] Marcel has gone so far as to suggest that suicide and human dignity are the equal alternatives of freedom; cf. "Authentic Humanness and Its Existential Primordial Assumptions," The Human Person and the World of Values, trans. Pierre de Fontnouvell ed. Baldwin V. Schwarz (New York: Fordham University Press, 1960), p.89.

[160] Supra, notes 33 to 35 in chapter on "Being and Having: The Phenomenological Foundation for Ethics," where we analyse charm and joy in relation to ethical action.

[161] PE, p.57. Quoted from Sartre's Le Sursis.

Second, the influence of the contemplated act on other people is not so much as considered. Third, the decision seems to be everything; nothing arises in the nature of a value which might promote or repress the action. Fourth, a different way of stating the third point is that the decision is of no consequence since freedom is absolute--absolutely nothing--anyway. Paradoxically, then, the decision seems to be both everything and nothing at the same time. Marcel would reply that this is an ethical situation involving the wise use of freedom in the midst of a context where others are involved too.

This assertion that freedom is always realised, not in isolated revolt, but in participative action in the given context, has special social implications for our modern urbanised societies. Marcel notes that transfers of populations are "crimes against humanity" because they prevent a man "an adjustment to his own milieu that shall be at least partly self-determined."[162] This is illustrated by the results of urban planning today. Admittedly the transfers of large segments of population en masse to "new towns" is done partially for the humane reason of stemming the tide of overcrowded city areas. But the results are often even more reprehensible. For example, in Glasgow, Scotland, new "schemes" have been thrown up in an effort to relieve overcrowded conditions in older areas of the city. One of the serious consequences of this "uprooting" is an increase in frequency and extent of juvenile misbehaviour. Some of the factors involved in the delinquency of these youth include: The lack of amenities in the new areas to provide for the organised use of leisure time; the fact that the parents themselves feel uprooted and their anxiety is passed along to the off-spring;

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[162] EBHD, p.151.

the evident problem of working mothers is increased by the factor that families and friends who "kept an eye" on the youth in the older environment are now widely separated from each other; often people of widely differing religious and cultural backgrounds are suddenly thrown together in the "schemes" without the necessary resources to form a community life; sometimes there are an insufficient number of people who are capable of forming a leadership nucleus which could turn a "scheme" into a neighborhood. The upshot of this story is that the search for freedom's values must take place in a situation where I have a sense of belonging, or else freedom is only autonomous, self-styled and anarchic.

"All human things of dearest value hang on slender strings."
Edmund Waller

CHAPTER XV

RECREATION OF VALUES

A. Preliminary Remarks

In an ontological understanding of moral values it is necessary to establish what is considered valuable. For values are both the goal and the criteria which offer shape to the man of moral freedom. The ethical man is a man who lives out these values. But the crucial question remains: What are these values and how do we find them?

Marcel's suspicion of the use of the term "value"[1] is consistent with his refusal to see his primary interest as moral. Those writers he admires most are, like R.M. Rilke, "witnesses to the spiritual" element in man.[2] Marcel too has devoted his attention to the search for being, rather than to the analysis of the moral questions. Yet we have noted, and it will become even more apparent, that the two cannot really be separated. One of the significant discoveries of Marcel's search for being is that autonomous value appears in "le monde cassé" as that devalued entity separated unnaturally from its foundation in the fulness of being.

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[1] MJ, p.xi.

[2] Cf. HV, pp.213-270. On p.213, Marcel describes Rilke as one who witnessed. A witness, as we have noted, is not merely an observer or a "mere echo," but one who participates, whose testimony is itself a "confirmation".

In spite of this suspicion of the usage of "value," Marcel has continued to use it himself. In essays in the 1940's and 1950's he spoke of "The Dangerous Situation in Ethical Values," "Value and Immortality"[3] and "The Crisis of Values in the Contemporary World".[4] This has double significance for us: First, Marcel realises that to gain the attention of his readers he must use language common to them, even if he endeavors to recreate the meaning of the words. Second, he seems to have been increasingly conscious of the fact that awareness of the "presence" of being can be illuminated most clearly within the context of moral values. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Marcel has admitted that his dramas are eminently "ethical" in nature.[5] This too accounts for what, in the Gifford Lectures, Marcel designates as the "mysterious dovetailing . . . of being and value."[6]

B. Values: Necessary or Contingent?

Our century is increasingly the time of the crisis of values. A sign of this fact, according to Marcel, is the emphasis on values for their own sake. Marcel believes that when a notion is discredited it is at this time that it finds increased usage in the contemporary jargon. Inflated usage coincides with deflated meaning. Of the "Valuists" in moral thought he makes the charge of "compromise":

> I am thus led to make the no doubt paradoxical assertion that the introduction of the idea of value into philosophy, an idea almost foreign to the metaphysicians

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[3] Cf. HV, pp.135-154.

[4] MAH, pp.122-142.

[5] Supra, note 12 in chapter on "Being and Having".

[6] MBII, p.46.

> of the past, is, as it were, a sympton of a kind of fundamental devaluation, a devaluation of reality itself.[7]

What is the crisis of values? Simply, it is the confusion about whether values are recognised or made. The definition, put briefly and formally, causes us to give an oversimplified answer: Marcel believes that such reductionism in the thought process leads inevitably to misunderstanding. Put in these terms only, Marcel's answer would necessarily be that values are "recognised". But this is of small assistance to understanding. Marcel's description of ethics breaks down this dichotomy represented in such a division.

Marcel speaks of "embodied values". In an attempt to define these he says:

> The property of a value, . . . is to assume a certain function in relation to life and, as it were, to mark it with its seal.[8]

In a later essay Marcel calls these values "incarnate requirements" or "existential certitudes". At this point he says:

> We can thus say that the fundamental existential certitude without which there can be no authentic humanness, resides in the affirmation (Bejahung) of an original bond, which might even be called umbilical, and which links the human being, not to the world in general. This would be meaningless--but to a certain environment, as specific and concrete as a cocoon or a nest.[9]

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[7] MAH, p.127. Who is included in this accusation? Certainly the "personalist" form of idealism is one recipient of the remark. They talked of "personality" at the turn of a century that was becoming increasingly dehumanised. It is of coincidental interest to note that Paul Tillich sees value as "a retreat from ontological inquiry," cf. Morality and Beyond (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p.13.

[8] HV, p.155.

[9] "Authentic Humanness and Its Existential Primordial Assumptions," op.cit., p.89.

It becomes apparent, in relation to what has been stated already, that authentic freedom in my total situation puts me in a position where true values appear on my horizon of vision.

In contrast, Jean-Paul Sartre insists that value is either recognised or made and that you cannot have it both ways. Sartre further insists that the rejection of *a priori* principles of morality involves the denial of the transcendent and *vice versa*. He says: "There can no longer be any good *a priori*, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it."[10]

The difference here between Marcel and Sartre might be delineated more precisely if we asked this question: Is a certain value necessary or contingent? Warnock is correct in her assessment of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*:

> One of the main conclusions of the whole book is that values are contingent. If anything has value for us, then we have freely chosen to assign that value for ourselves.[11]

Marcel would see the spectre of Nietzsche in this assertion, though surrounded by a certain untenability caused by the increase of "rationalism and materialism" in Sartre.[12] He replies to Sartre's position: "I find that I do not 'choose' my values at all, but that I *recognise* them and then posit my actions in accordance or contradiction . . ."[13]

It is clear that a divergence in the notion of creation is the factor which separates. Based on his idealistic

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[10] Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, *op.cit.*, p.33.

[11] Warnock, *op. cit.*, p.87.

[12] PE, p.64; also, cf. DW, p.32.

[13] PE, p.64.

heritage, Sartre is unable to see any sense in speaking of a receptivity which is also a creation. Breaking away from this tradition Marcel began clearly to affirm a mystery that defied this rigid logic. In an early note Marcel said:

> I have been reflecting once again on the mysterious relation between conservation and creation. There can only be conservation in the realm of that which is created which is also the realm of that which has value (conservation implies the active struggle against dissolution.).[14]

Much later he said:

> As I see it, the fundamental problem seems to be to understand how a certain degree of transcendence can be assigned to values without turning these values into simple objects of the mind localized in an artificial firmament.[15]

It becomes clear from these statements what the real crisis in values is for Marcel. The confusion between whether they are recognised or made is not the primary question. It is rather the prevalence of the objectifying type of thought which turns a value into something which I have as an a priori possession. The consequence of such a procedure is the denial of the transcendent quality of values. This is not a necessary consequence in terms of logic but Marcel believes the history of thought indicates that it is almost inevitable. Marcel sees the Sartrean project as the placing of a claim on that which man cannot "have" in that sense.

In terms previously used, the question resolves into this one: Are values akin to being or having? Sartre's position is already abundantly clear. Marcel began to establish his position on this matter as early as his Metaphysical Journal. Is the closing paragraph of that diary he set down

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[14] MJ, p.151.

[15] "M. Sartre's Conception of Liberty," Thought, Vol.XXII (1947), p.17.

what amounts to a programmatic remark:

> I am wondering whether it is not by presence that we can effect the transition from existence to value. Is not that which has value also that which increases in us the feeling of presence . . . In these reflections there is one essential point--they seem to make possible a transition from metaphysics to ethics; for our worth is decreased to the extent to which our affirmation of existence is limited, pale and hesitant.[16]

In an even earlier note Marcel had asserted: "We cannot then avoid positing a metaphysical foundation to values, that is . . . conceiving a relation between the good and being."[17] I can detect no substantial shift in position in Marcel from this early note, except that the position becomes more fully elaborated.[18] Thomas J.J. Altizer is correct to say that, for Marcel, to cry "is" is to say "yes" or, which is equivalent, "thou".[19] I would add that this affirmation of being in a situation carries with it the implication of an "ought". Reinhardt correctly comments that in Marcel's opinion, Sartre's notion of dereliction in the world is alleviated by certain "values" which are themselves "incarnate in being" along with myself. Quoting Marcel, Reinhardt adds: "Value can only be safeguarded where being is safeguarded as a mystery of which I partake from the moment I begin to exist."[20]

Sartre represents for Marcel the theoretical and the practical consequences of the effort to objectify values and

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[16] MJ, p.317. Underlining mine.

[17] PF, p.83, in an essay dating from 1912-1913, on "Notes on the Ground of Values".

[18] Supra, notes 4 and 5.

[19] Loc.cit.

[20] Op.cit., p.212, quoting from Gabriel Marcel, "Aperçus sur la Liberté" in La Nef, No.19 (1946), p.73.

thus to separate them from their ontological foundations. The theoretical question is raised: How is it possible for Sartre to turn a negative concept of freedom into a positive value? He does this by making of freedom itself the prior and primary value and by conceiving the decisions of that free will as a project towards a goal. Value for Sartre is basically a matter of "having," while for Marcel it is "essentially something that does not allow itself to be chosen."[21] We must not think that values, as they are spoken of by Marcel, refer to any objective worth which can be placed as a price tag. Rather it is Marcel's endeavor to describe an authentic value. He tries to indicate the metaphysical implications which give to it the worth in the first place.

The practical significance of the difference between Sartre and Marcel is seen in the kind of moral decision they affirm. Marcel has referred numerous times to the concentration camps and the forced movement of large segments of people in Eastern Europe. Both of these activities have been justified as means of bringing in a new order. This practice is based on the notion that "the true human being is still to come." In Sartrean terms, man is only a project with his being in the future yet to be grasped. This Marcel opposes on the basis of values which are "an original existential certitude". Such practices, Marcel believes, are evidence of the critical threat to values in this century. For Marcel the idea of the "not-yet man" is a practical expression of the having consciousness in its daemonic stage. Such a projection arises strictly from the abstracting mind rather than from human experience. Man here is like a blueprint to be machined into existence by a "self-styled elite". Is man born simply to prepare for life? Marcel does not oppose this

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[21] MAH, p.128.

Marxist activity on the basis of Kantian postulate of the practical reason. The opposition he asserts is founded on the necessity of being-in-a-situation:

> When I say that these [population transfers] take place in defiance of something which is closely linked to the authentic human being, do I merely imply that they go against certain requirements of the intellect? Absolutely not, for we are faced in this instance with an incarnate requirement, and it is precisely this incarnation which is so very important. I mean that when we condemn these forced transfers, we have in mind--and this is the very foundation of my position--the existence of countless human beings who have been able to reach fulfillment in their vocation only because they were fortunate enough to live for generations on a certain soil, to which they were bound by a certain tie, not only a tie of belonging but also a bond of love. The idea of co-belonging (zusammengehörigheit) of man and of the actual space where he lives appears to be a fundamental concept.[22]

Marcel would concur in Sartre's condemnation of the aggressive suppression of the Hungarian Revolt of 1956, but he would wonder how Sartre could account for his conclusion. In the same way, Marcel wonders how Sartre could account for his affirmation of the French Resistance during World War II.[23] Thus, in practical as well as theoretical terms, how can such moral freedom achieve the virtue of a value for Sartre? It would appear that it is only on the basis of an image which the person or group seeks after in order to possess it. For Marcel, this position is reprehensible in that it defines value only in terms of its own choice, thus robbing it of its transcendent quality. Also, even the chosen image may, at

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[22] "Authentic Humanness and Its Existential Primordial Assumptions," op.cit., pp.87-88. This paragraph is based on this source, pp.86-88; also, cf. MAH, p.108, where Marcel speaks of "pathological behaviour" in this connection.

[23] Cf. PE, p.63.

any future moment, be discarded for another since no previously accepted value has any meaning if I choose to ignore it. Rather, Marcel seeks to establish the recognition of certain necessary values subject to discovery in the context of experience itself.

C. Interrelated Values

It is constituent of value that it can assume many forms. It is "polymorphous".[24] This multiform appearance is caused by the fact that each value is capable of coming to the surface in widely separate circumstances. Further, the personal factor obliterates the autonomous image. It is caused too by the fact that each value comes to bear upon a situation only in relation to another value or values. Marcel is perfectly clear about all aspects of this interrelation.

World Context. First, values must be related to this situation in life: Kantian ethics command us to treat others as ends in themselves. Though pointing in the right direction, Marcel believes this position to be an insufficient guide for today. Such an intellectual approach contained heightened adequacy when the "mental climate [was] soaked in the Christian spirit". (Marcel believes that such an atmosphere was still unconsciously prevalent even among the "free-thinkers of the late nineteenth century" but he sees that "our contemporaries have lost" this attitude.)[25] What Marcel seeks to stress is this: The content and the approach of ethical decision-making "cannot be taken as being independent

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[24] MJ, p.xi.

[25] MBII, p.93. Supra, notes 38 and 39 in chapter on "Inadequacy of Rules".

of the concrete context which is their setting".[26]

Interhuman Context. A more appropriate way of putting this matter is to speak of "incarnate values". Value must be communal in a situation. On this point Marcel is emphatic: "A value is nothing if it is not incarnated."[27] Marcel has doubtless been influenced by Max Scheler in his discussion of "material values" such as "sympathy" and he gives clear indication of a certain vague reliance on Charles Peguy in his discussion of such values as fidelity and hope.[28] Certainly, Marcel's study of Royce's writings on "loyalty" influenced him deeply. In the Gifford Lectures he affirms Royce's belief that "a man who is engaged in the search for truth enters into an ideal community." But Marcel wants to insist, beyond Royce, that the "ideal city" has the transcendent intimacy of a "town" as opposed to a mere "cluster of buildings". To turn from this situation would be like "sinning against the light," which illumines this centre of truth.[29] It is obvious that the interpersonal aspect of the ethical situation finds emphasis here.

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[26] MBII, p.94.

[27] HV, p.155.

[28] Cf. CF, pp.31 and 153 respectively.

[29] Cf. MBI, pp.72-74 for these references to Royce's analogy. Marcel had already noted in HV, pp.155-156, that Royce's "effort to save universality without becoming separated from the realm of concrete action is to be admired." But without the introduction of the "situation in life there is a great risk that Royce's idea of the spirit of loyalty will be felt as an empty aspiration, as an inconsistent dream, as a fiction." Here we see again Marcel's resistance to abstraction in moral or other thought.

Symbiosis of Values. The interpenetration of values with each other is equally necessary.[30] To put this less abstractly, persons in the throes of ethical encounter should allow all the commensurate values possible to converge on their situation. If this openness does not occur there appears the risk that one value will be turned into an object of worship.

Sincerity is commendable, but it may become an idol. Marcel earlier criticised Gide for becoming overly obsessed by "sincerity". He later came to call Sartre "un Gide aggrave". Sartre has criticised the intersubjective relationship as causing us either to live in the past or turning us into something we are not. Because of this analysis he too believes that the best ethical stance is full sincerity. If a man has participated in a homosexual act or if he has lied, he ought to confess: "I am a homosexual" or "I am a liar." In addition to disagreeing that the act so fully constitutes the man, Marcel would want to say with Sartre that not only does such a confession "make him a little less" a homosexual or a liar, but that this openness places the man "in a new position [situation] in which the overcoming of that defect may perhaps be possible."[31] In our current terms, he allows other values to converge on the situation rather than elevating one out of all proportion. It is perfectly clear that Sartre would not regard even this confession as sincere en toto since for him to say "I am a liar" is equivalent to saying, "that is all I am," which is obviously "mauvaise foi".

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[30] Cf. MBII, p.165, for example, where Marcel says that "values really hang together." When he speaks of "values themselves" he is in danger of obscuring the fact that it is not "detached ideals" of which he speaks.

[31] PE, p.49.

Marcel considered this problem of sincerity much earlier than Sartre in his diary reflections on fidelity.[32] In considering the durability of a promise he asked how he could promise to be what he was not yet and how he could escape the fact that he had made a promise which he might not now desire to fulfill. His answer developed in terms of the "ontological weight" of the issue promised, which gave a real foundation to sincerity if the person remained open to its influence.[33] In other words, this is a recognition that, when a promise of importance is made, other values, such as truth and love, come to bear on the event. Not only sincerity is involved.

This interpenetration of values with each other would appear to be the "seal" of the mystery of being on that event. It is to this "presence" that morally perceptive persons may respond. Sincerity in only autonomous terms appears to Marcel to border on the "fanaticised consciousness".[34] Here we have a case where "opinion" has been "pushed to paroxysm".[35] The focus must be upon the individual life in the situation where values appear, rather than on a predetermined image. This is true whether the value is alleged to be "God-given" or "man-made".[36] Intersubjectivity should shape sincerity rather than fall prey to its obsessiveness.

Summary. It is the interrelation of values which issues as the hallmark of Marcel's position. This relation,

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[32] Cf. BH, pp.41-57.

[33] Supra, note 128 in chapter on "Recreative Fidelity".

[34] Cf. MAH, pp.89-111.

[35] MAH, p.111.

[36] Marcel speaks of the danger of focusing on imaginary images such as "Utopia, Mecca, or Rome," MAH, p.111; also, cf. HV, pp.208-209.

it must be understood, is not subject to complete objectification. The notion is really the interpenetration of that which can only be separated artificially because they are united in the fulness of being. This interrelation involves the situation, the participants and the other values which appear in this context.

D. Primary Values

Three values significant in Marcel's scheme of things are those of truth, love and justice. The latter he has not discussed in any detail. Marcel would believe that a proper interrelation of truth and love would tend to give true equity in a situation. No doubt he would have discussed justice in detail if he had granted increased attention to the broader spheres of political and economic life.

Truth. It is crucial that we understand truth as a related value. In the Gifford Lectures, Marcel was careful to indicate that truth was an involved value.[37] It is involved in my situation which includes especially my relation to myself and to other people. There is an inseparable coinherence between fact and value:

> We must not hesitate to affirm that the coherence of a fact, of any fact, is conferred on it by the mind that grasps it, by the understanding self.[38]

But this is not a return to a form of idealism. Marcel asserts that a "fact" was not merely something natural, something only inert and passive. Rather, "everything that really seems to be a relation between my understanding and the facts is really a relation between me and myself." In

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[37] Cf. MBI, pp.57-76; supra, note 37 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".

[38] MBI, p.64. Supra, p.196.

"facing the truth" this split within my personality is resolved. As always, this can only occur when a "thou" opens up to me the possibility of intersubjective understanding within a certain habitat which, though not native to me, yet beckons me on as a "distant gleam" of light.[39]

Marcel's effort to distinguish truth which may not be relegated to either factual statements or subjective perspective involves a delicate presentation.[40] So astute a commentator as James Collins fails to comprehend the goal which is presented, when he suggests that Marcel sees truth in terms of religious dogma.[41] Certainly, this is not the way it is characteristically presented in Marcel's writing. In fact, it is clear that a certain closed presentation of these "truths" is extremely liable to obscure the light of whatever truth they contain. It is the search for autonomous truth, truth in itself, whether religious or secular, which Marcel has endeavored to oppose. He has said:

> The role of philosophic reflection will be to make apparent the fallacious character of any particular truth, if it be reduced to an element that can be isolated from its knowing.[42]

Marcel would not intend to deny that there is such a phenomenon as a "psychological mood" nor that the formula $E=MC^2$ is a valid fact open to universal knowledge. There is indeed a difference to be acknowledged here. But the difference is

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[39]Cf. MBI, pp.74-76, in Marcel's picture of the two climbers together spurred by and moving towards truth; supra, note 35 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".

[40]It is the notion of recreativity which is the key to such a presentation.

[41]"Gabriel Marcel and the Mystery of Being," op.cit., p.672.

[42]Presence et Immortalité (Paris: Flammarion, 1959), p.16, quoted in O'Malley, op.cit., p.19.

"only of epistemological interest".[43] There is a "fundamental experience" which is prior to this encounter with particular truths of an individual or general character.

Not only is this "spirit of truth" difficult to perceive but it is equally difficult to maintain. Like all ontological values, it is always in danger of "constraint" on the one hand and "pure spontaneity" on the other. The most ominous threat appears to be that position, ostensibly full of integrity, that professes "love of truth".[44] What is it that might cause a scientist to refuse at great personal risk when a party or state ask him to deny a conclusion of his research?[45] Is it reverence for the truth, unrelieved confidence in the usefulness of research, a certain pride of place or self-respect? It could be done in the name of any or all of these. These, however, answer the profound nature of this ethical dilemma only in part. For the scientist who is also a person in touch with real values

> It is not himself that is at stake, but truth; the truth of which he is an interpreter and to which in a certain sense he bears witness. If he were to recant, he would be perjuring himself.[46]

If I say, "The truth depends on my decision" I have taken the transcendent quality away and it is to be wondered if

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[43]"Authentic Humanness and Its Existential Primordial Assumption," op.cit., p.91.

[44]Marcel would agree with the famous epigram of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself better than all," Aids to Reflection: Moral and Religious Aphorism, Vol.XXV.

[45]This moral dilemma is posed in the context of the discussion of truth in MBI, pp.71-72.

[46]MBI, p.72; supra, section E, on "Testimony as Ethical Vocation," in chapter on "Recreative Testimony in a Broken World".

there is anything left but an absurd courage. If I say, "My will leads only to failure," it is questionable if I really believe my decision means anything anyway. The "spirit of truth" is only known by a constant vigilance against both worldly success and self-complacency. It comes to life by an active witness to our finest experience. "What depends on us is in short to dispose ourselves favourably in relation to a possible grace."[47]

Love. Marcel's manner of talking of love has been in terms of fidelity. So much has been written about love that Marcel has shied away from adding much to the vast morass. It is certain that he would agree with St. Paul that love is the crowning virtue or value.[48] It is "the greatest" because it is the culmination of faith and hope, both as their exigence and their goal. Contrary to Sartre, who claims that love aims at the destruction of oneself in a masochistic gesture or at the crushing of the other in a sadistic venture, Marcel claims that love is the only possibility of mutual fulfillment.[49] Contrary to Simone de Beauvoir, who claims that permanence in love is either pure habitualness or dutiful self-constraint, Marcel claims that there is the possibility of communion between persons which is in its essence mutually creative.

In broken, modern society there often appears to be a fierce opposition between truth and love in the search for justice. It is Marcel's intention to show that when the two become detached from their structural position in the ontological

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[47] HV, p.141.

[48] I Corinthians 13. Except that he is reluctant to call love a "value".

[49] PE, p.55.

mystery, they themselves tend to grow apart. On the rootage of love in being, Marcel has spoken explicitly. "Love is substantial, love is rooted in being, love is not commensurate with anything on which a value can be set."[50] Marcel's philosophy so fully finds its culmination in the value of love that he is unwilling to call love itself a value, even though it is integral to the existence of values: "For love is not a value itself and yet . . . there is not and cannot be any value without love."[51] Against Sartre, Marcel says:

> Hope implies a concrete nous which can only be that of love. Now love and values, if they are to be saved, can only be saved together. A philosophy which denies the reality of values can see nothing in love but a pretention propped up by nothingness.[52]

I see no compelling reason why love should not be recognised as one of the ontological values. If Marcel hopes to indicate that it towers above other values in its significance, as we have already said he does, it does not seem necessary to remove it from the realm of values to establish that. It fits within his nonobjective definition of value quite as well as does truth. If values are recognised in their "embodied" character it appears that love fits this description in perfect style. Even if Marcel has some motive for pushing love "beyond" value, the point of its interrelation foundation in being and its relation to other values, seems sufficiently clear.

In "le monde cassé" love is often detached from all other issues. It becomes the excuse for almost any extravagance

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[50] MAH, p.142; supra, note 129 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement," where love is defined in relation to ontological weight.

[51] MAH, p.142.

[52] "M. Sartre's Conception of Liberty," op.cit., p.18.

or nearly any tight-lipped loyalty. As with fidelity, which appears to be nearly synonomous, there is a thoroughly conditioned quality about love. Its commitment is such that a bond is created which appears to be equal to any circumstance that arises. This bond is intersubjective in nature; human love can only be despair if there is never a note of reciprocity. It is sometimes said of the welded spot that holds two sections of metal together that it is the strongest part of the structure. This is a picture of Marcel's meaning about the ontological nature of love. Esse est co-esse. As Troisfontaines has commented:

> If I really love you I shall love you no matter what you do. According to your actions, my love for you will take different forms: of shared joy, of anguish, of patience, of pity--of who knows what else. But I shall never deny the bond that unites us, any more than a mother can disown her unworthy child, or God his sinful creature. Because love bears on being, not an idea of being.[53]

Marcel has argued for such a position in terms of our highest experience rather than on the basis of logical data. He states that this experience includes "privileged moments" which offer insight into the "being" of love. The fact that this relationship usually appears to be "the consciousness which the members are able to get of it" does not necessarily mean that there are not "noticeable hints" which point past this pure subjectivity. We have asked ourselves, "How can that gentleman love that 'blue stocking'?" But is there not a certain dignity about a couple who have grown old together. The fact that there are so many lack-lustre facsimilies of

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[53] Roger Troisfontaines, "La Notion De 'Presence' Chez Gabriel Marcel," Existentialisme Chretien: Gabriel Marcel, ed. Etienne Gilson (Paris: Libraise Plon, 1947); quoted in Markus, loc. cit.; supra, note 129 in chapter on "Mutual Engagement".

this love need not destroy the beauty of the one or two examples brought to attention in our experience. It seems that such a relationship has a growing "accretion of being" through the years based on the mutual surmounting of outwardly unfavourable circumstances. Marcel insists on the importance of such examples.

> I should say without hesitation that a living personal relationship becomes itself a source of heat and light even for those who are not directly involved therein.[54]

But what of the factual experience of disappointment in all forms of love? What of estrangement and death? Marcel never fails to emphasize the note of caution into this picture. He himself has known premature separation from his mother and from his wife. Time and circumstance can bring "merciless pressure". Marcel honestly admits: "Under these conditions there will always be room for frustration and even for despair." There exists no formula or "magical device" which is capable of warding off such bitter disappointment. The advice to "do this" or "do that," so much a part of our folklore, is sheer foolishness. Marcel's one assertion at this point is not like these activist suggestions at all. He believes that the more love is "nonpossessive" the more certain the participants are of "conquered death," understood in both its literal and figurative senses. In other words, love that continually transforms "having" into "being" by mutual openness has a fighting chance to survive and grow.[55]

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[54]This quotation and other quotes in the above paragraph stem from "Theism and Personal Relationships," op.cit., pp.38-40.

[55]This paragraph contains quotations from Ibid., pp.40-41.

The ethical implications of these considerations are immense. Marcel has accused Sartre of bowing to self-made images. This is the characteristic of the problemmatic consciousness in ethical matters. This is the "nothing but" attitude in philosophy. For example, "Love is not anything but sexual desire."[56] The "not anything but" is one form of idolotry. A commentator on Marcel has asked: "Is it or is it not true that to build up another person in our own image is just a lesser form of what, where God is concerned, is called idolatry?"[57] Marcel would give an affirmative answer to this question. Love resists making the other in our own image.

> Since I belong to you as you belong to me, I cannot wish to make you anything other than what you wish yourself; my caprice as such does not enter.[58]

Love refuses to make a comparison between an image I have and the being presented: "Whatever the principle of comparison may be, our love rejects it.[59] Love which persists in comparison turns the other into something which he is not and thus becomes a subtle form of betrayal.[60]

If this sounds idealistic in comparison to what we usually see in the taut relationships around us, it is indicative of the loss of sense of "presence" to which Marcel points. He is not insisting that human beings may attain to

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[56] Cf. MBII, p.67 and HV, p.36.

[57] Markus, loc.cit.

[58] CF, p.99.

[59] CF, p.99.

[60] Cf. MJ, p.64; "In as much as he loves (that is in as much as he converts the object into subject) he must absolutely forgo making a judgement."

pure agape love, for human heterosexual love requires its erotic expression. This would be a dissassociation of being and having which is impossible in this world. Similarly, the filial forms of love are dependent on a certain degree of reciprocity for their very being. Marcel would deny that he points to a joyless love, bloodless and deprived of all passion. Rather, he makes the striking assertion that the very antithesis of love is "boredom".[61] It is not "having" which lack in love discloses; it is rather a "closed having" which Marcel readily identifies as pride. This is the personal manifestation of the act of setting up an idol as the object of love.

The Sacred. Love cannot then emerge or remain without the integral value of humility. It is the correlative to love as tolerance is to truth. Is it not the phenomenon of the injured ego which often wrecks profound damage to the best relationships? Marcel is under no false illusions; this humility can often be the masochism which Sartre so deftly recognises He admits that such masochism has even crept into the religious communities as a pathological perversion of the real.[62] Marcel also acknowledges that psychological "techniques of degradation" in our times have caused the "abdication of consciousness" in favour of an "ignominious confession".[63]

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[61] Alice Jourdain, "Von Hildebrand and Marcel: A Parallel," The Human Person and the World of Values, op.cit., p.27, quoted from Roger Troisfontaines, De L'Existence à L'Être, op.cit, p.33. Statements in MJ, p.236, would seem to corroborate this assertion.

[62] MBII, pp.89-90. Professor Ian Henderson's remarks on "religious masochism" made me aware of Marcel's appreciation of this pathological factor as an ever present danger in much religious practice.

[63] MBII, p.88. Marcel here refers to "mock trials" in Eastern Europe during this century.

What Marcel insists upon is the recognition of certain forms of humility which stand out as "real" over against these degraded images. As far as Marcel is concerned Sartre's description of humility as a "sadistic craving for mortification," holds true only in the "restricted area of the life of consciousness".[64] Marcel suggests that "patience" is the accompaning trait which prevents the excessive harshness that sometimes surrounds so-called humility. This is achieved by maintaining a detachment from ourselves which allows for a recognition of our finitude and propensity to error.[65]

We cannot fail to note the relation of this humility to the affirmation of religious faith. Marcel defines humility as follows: "We could go so far as to say that it consists not in the act of self-humiliation, but rather in the recognition of our own nothingness."[66] Marcel readily admits that humility without the recognition of being is simply humiliation--"nothingness". Marcel would insist that Sartre's position has a certain consistency; without being humility is humiliation. There is no strictly rational evidence that can remove the premise, much less counter the conclusion. But seen in relation to the affirmation of faith, humility gains a solid consistency.

Marcel's essay on "Value and Immortality" points out the necessity of maintaining the relation between the valuable and the sacred. In terms of the specific religious affirmation of the survival of personality, Marcel says:

> If death is the ultimate reality, value is annihilated in mere scandal, reality is pierced to the heart. . . value can only be thought of as a reality . . . if it is

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[64] MBII, p.85.

[65] CF, pp.46-47.

[66] MBII, p.85.

> related to the consciousness of an immortal destiny . . . In a world of scandal where absurdity had gained the upper hand, that is to say, where what is best and highest was at the mercy of blind forces, where, because a little piece of iron has passed through their heads, it had become for ever impossible to get on with people like Péguy or like Alain Fournier. . . there would not perhaps be a single value which was not in danger of appearing ludicrous and suspect.[67]

Our point here is simply to establish the interpenetration of value, even to the extent of their creative interaction with the fundamental religious affirmations. This is not to say that to establish a certain value we have to presuppose "eternal life". It is rather that an analysis of the circumstances where value appears makes it necessary to ask the question of immortality. Our experience seems to indicate that values are degraded and fade from sight when separated from these affirmations. These affirmations are part of the context to which we must have an "open mind" if we are to give the "presence" of value an adequate opportunity to become creative in our lives. Morality is not dependent on religion or vice versa, but there appears to be a mutual dependence or a creative attestation to each other when either is incarnate in human life. This is not to deny the existence of a worthy humanist or of an irresponsible believer, but it too put such a being in question and to ask whether he has the seminal strength to perpetuate his kind.

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[67] HV, pp.152-153. Marcel says, in MBII, p.15: "We must, in short, state as categorically as possible . . . that it is on the ground of immortality that our decisive metaphysical choice must be made."

E. Universality of Values

Our goal has been to describe moral values in their intimate setting in such a way as to explode the rumour that they are either "givens" for all of us or "products" by each of us. It will be apparent that Marcel aims to explicate a set of values which, by their rootage in being, escape the horns of this dilemma. This is not an attempt to establish a "third term" or a "middleway". This for Marcel could only be an artificial solution, an abstraction which further confused the issues in a time when suggested solutions to the "crisis of values" multiply at a bewildering rate of speed. Such conclusions are only open to "conference philosophers" who produce documents to which all represented can subscribe and which, therefore, are thoroughly diluted in content.[68]

Platonism? As usual, with a thinker who attempts to break new ground, there is an inevitable attempt to abstract from what he has really written. This abstraction takes the form of categorisation. It is not that Marcel can escape his "place" in the history of philosophy, but it is to be wished that the possible uniqueness of his proposal will be heard before his reflections become Marcelism. This applies to Zuurdeeg's analysis of the nature of values for Marcel. He is in harmony with Marcel's position when he notes that we do not die for "liberty" in general but for a country that incorporates liberty. To the extent that we die for "liberty"

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[68]Marcel calls such "conference" participants "ideologists," in PF, p.8. Such an approach denies the fact that a philosopher has embarked on a vocation which is at heart a "personal pledging," as Marcel calls it in "What One Can Expect of Philosophy," op.cit., p.151; supra, note 64 in chapter on "Recreative Testimony in a Broken World".

as a conceptualisation without any concrete embodiment, we die for "nothing". Among other points in his analysis, Zuurdeeg says that in Marcel's value structure (1)one must live in service to these values since (2)they are always in danger of falling prey to attack (from well-intentioned people such as Karl Barth who devalues value by placing too much stress on revelation and from a certain obsessive sociology which places too much importance on statistical surveys). Indeed (3)values only remain alive when people have the willingness to courageously take risks to maintain their buoyant vitality.[69]

Having made this correct analysis it is strange that Zuurdeeg "pigeon-holes" Marcel as a "Platonist".[70] As with many things in Marcel, we cannot deny that statement outright. It is true that there are echoes of Plato in the reflections examined here. If Marcel were to analyse beauty it would apparently be in Platonic terms.[71] But Marcel would only wish to reinstate Plato as something of a stop-gap measure, since this way of doing philosophy takes too little account of the concrete situation of the individual.[72] Marcel would care to revivify Plato in the same sense that he believes it would now "be untimely and even highly imprudent . . . to depreciate Kantian ethics."[73] In other words, a philosopher might prefer to expound Platonism if it would have beneficial

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[69] Op.cit., pp.258-260.
[70] Ibid., p.264.
[71] F. Temple Kingston, French Existentialism: A Christian Critiqu (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), pp. 49, 87 and 125.
[72] MBI, p.76.
[73] MBII, p.73.

effect in a society given over to the depreciation of values, rather than to capitulate to the kind of sincerity promulgated in Sartre's thought. But in our broken world such enlightened philosophies, no matter how strong their moral value may have once been, must be regarded as largely dated.[74]

But Marcel does not attempt to simply write footnotes to Plato. His stress on the risk to the individual, brought on by the vulnerability of values, is not an emphasis to be found in Plato's thought. Values are not to be conceived, according to Marcel, as ideals imposed upon the thought process. Marcel would be unwilling to make an exact identification between knowledge and virtue as Socrates did. The "polymorphous" nature of values, which we have attempted to describe, defies such a simplistic notion.

It would be true to say that values have the function of a "mirror" in Marcel's ethical thought. Marcel says that the essence of value may be found in its "translucency":

> Value is the mirror wherein is given us to discern, always imperfectly and always through a distorting mist, the real face of our destiny . . .[75]

But the "imperfection" and the "distorting mist" must be emphasized, for this is our experience. Marcel's "drama of the soul in exile," shows us that man is a traveler who is "required to cut himself a dangerous path across the unsteady blocks of a universe which has collapsed and seems to be crumbling in every direction."[76] Cain is correct to say that these values at one and the same time open us to "a 'beyond' to which our earthly existence opens the way or from

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[74]This Marcel admitted early in his career, PF, p.15.

[75]HV, p.153.

[76]HV, p.153. Supra, note 179 in chapter on "Recreative Fidelity".

which it excludes us."[77] It is this existential nature of values as conceived by Marcel (which is not simply a propagandistic additive for our time) which makes it inadvisable to call Marcel a "Platonist" if one is interested in precision.

Marcel has spoken of universal values as if they were fixed a priori essences.[78] But this is not characteristic of his work. Any principles to guide our ethical decisions can only stem from experience and even then they are subject to reappraisal in the light of increased experience. It is the nature of this experience, in fact, which is vital to the discovery of values. Ours must be an "embodied testimony" to our experience. We must "embody the universal within the concrete vision of reality that is ours."[79] If I am witness to an accident, for example, "I am obliged to bear witness because I hold, as it were, a particle of light, and to keep it myself would be equivalent to extinguishing it."[80] Here the notion of the universal-concrete appears. The universal is a part of objective experience, but it only obtains and retains its reality when I involve my very being in its implications. Marcel writes:

> My testimony bears on something independent from me and objectively real; it has therefore an essentially objective end. At the same time it commits my entire being as a person who is answerable for my assertions and for myself. This tension between the inward commitment and the objective end seems to me existential in the highest degree.[81]

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[77] Op.cit., p.86.

[78] Cf. MAH, p.55, where the translation speaks of "transcendental laws".

[79] Murchland, op.cit., p.355. Murchland is wrong, however, to see the notion of testimony as Marcel's "specifically religious dimension," p.354. It is no more religious than the other notions Marcel harbours.

[80] PE, p.70.

[81] The extensive would be like historical observation, a Kantian postulate, a consensus, a rational ideal, etc. PE, p.70.

Profound Values. This leads us to say that the universal values for Marcel are intensive rather than extensive.[82] The picture is one of depth, not breadth.[83] An analogy comes to mind: In certain systematic treatments of theology in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition original sin is treated as having "totally blighted" the soul of an individual. The totality spoken of here, however, as opposed to certain Calvinistic teaching on the subject, is extensive rather than intensive. By that they mean that the whole extent of the soul has been blighted by sin, but not to its very depths, which depth still retains a responsiveness to the redemptive appeal. In Marcel's description of universal "embodied values" we must simply invert the analogy. Universality in values pertains to their intensive or profound appeal to men in every situation. They are not extensive in any sense. All of experience may exhibit values but only if the subject is alert at a level below the surface. Universality appears on a profound level of received experience. We must open the vital portion of our being in active reception.

Whatever universal Marcel is able to establish it must by definition retain a certain instability. This is because it is always integral to the experience of man as explorer. Risk and anguish are part of the existence of the man who refuses both indifference and absorption into abstract principles. For this qualifying reason Marcel's use of the notion of the "ontological weight" of values appears to be a preferable description of the situation. Marcel says:

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[82] Cf. MAH, p.200.

[83] MAH, p.200.

> We should not hesitate to say . . . that every personally felt emotion in contact with those realities [love, death, birth, etc.,] is something of an embyonic philosophical experience.[84]

How can we describe an ethical man in terms of these universal values? He is a free man who has responded positively, thereby increasing his freedom, to the profound resonances in his own experience.[85] Conversely, "the man who has betrayed truth--and by that one must understand truth not as a meaningless abstraction, but as one's own truth--can no longer be a free man.[86] Nor can this be understood as either of which is a Sartrean sort of rejection. Such a rejection, for example, of a gift, limits the meaning that this experience may assume and simultaneously destroys the freedom of a man to give meaning to future experience. Marcel believes that reflection shows that there is an ontological lack revealed when a man turns from the depths of his own experience. He would agree with the words of Martin Buber:

> Evil cannot be done with the whole soul; good can only be done with the whole soul. It is done when the soul's rapture, proceeding from the highest forces, seizes upon all the forces and plunges them into the purging and transmitting fire, as into the mightiness of decision. Evil is lack of direction and that which is done in it and out of it as the grasping, seizing, devouring, compelling, seducing, exploiting, humiliating, torturing and destroying of what offers itself.

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[84] "What One Can Expect of Philosophy," op.cit., p.157.

[85] We should add that Marcel would not necessarily call the opposite sort "immoral". He sees that many are simply "unawakened".

[86] EBHD, p.150.

> Good is direction and what is done in it; that which is done in it is done with the whole soul, so that in fact all the vigor and passion with which evil might have been done is included in it.[87]

Values at Stake. Possibly we can explicate the meaning of "embodied values" for ethical decision in terms of this "whole soulness" or "ontological weight". Say a man has been addicted to gambling to the extent that all aspects of his life--his work, his family relations, his social standing--have suffered. Suppose that he makes a decision not to gamble again. How should such a decision be viewed in terms of values? Sartre's answer and Marcel's solution appear to be vastly different. I quote from Robert G. Olson:

> Sartre says that a present decision not to gamble provides no guarantee of one's future behaviour. In this he is right. But he concludes that at every moment man is free of past commitments and must therefore choose himself anew. In this he is wrong, to be sure, no one's present decision not to gamble commits him irrevocably and no one can predict his future behaviour with absolute certainty. But there are degrees of commitment and degrees of accuracy with respect to our predictions about the future just as there are degrees of moral responsibility.[88]

Here we have a solution sounding very much like that of Marcel. He would agree with Sartre that the decision not to gamble holds out no certainty for the future. But Marcel would say that the decision itself is important in terms of its obvious implications for personal destiny. If he is able

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[87] Good and Evil: Two Interpretations (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp.130-131. Marcel would want to reserve a place for the daemonic, which does not appear here in this quotation.

[88] Robert G. Olson, "Authenticity, Metaphysics and Moral Responsibility," Philosophy, Vol.XXXIV (1959), p.110.

to stake enough of himself on the values that draw him to his decision he is likely to be able to maintain his decision. Such values might include the "love" of his family and friends, the "truth" that the gambling activity had squandered his resources or the "justice" which he now sees as defied by a life centred around a "chance".

In very practical terms, I think Marcel would be willing to submit that the high percentage of success gained by organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous may be attributed to the "ontological weight" of the values they seek to recover. In nearly every case a man "at the end of his tether" seeks for help which, he confesses, is strictly beyond himself. The intersubjective element with others in like circumstances is one of the main emphases. There is a recogniton that their status is always in jeopardy. Thus, they are willing in frank humility to refer to themselves as "alcoholics," even after many years without so much as a single alcoholic drink. The mutual recognition of the relation of the values they seek to regain and the religious affirmation they make is a foundational point in the whole structure. It will be seen, in fact, that nearly all the aspects of what we have called "interrelatedness" are to be found in this concrete situation. In such a setting, the very extremity of the experience has become the "ontological weight" which is like a source of light in our experience. There is an intensive universality presented here for those whose search is deep enough to sense the transcendent element in a "happening".[89]

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[89] Cf. "What One Can Expect of Philosophy," op.cit., p.161, where Marcel speaks of this receptivity in terms of a finely tuned ear.

Marcel gives the following as the "first ethical commandment": I must respond to and not "sin against" [reject] the light.[90] What light is this? It is that "which we can only define as the identity at the upper limit of Love and Truth; we should have to add that a truth which lies below that limit is a pseudo-truth and conversely that a love without truth is in some respects a mere delirium."[91] We "have" this light when we "radiate" or testify to it. We lose the light and our freedom to experience it to the extent that we see ourselves as the possessors of this value or, which is the same, the makers of it. We are at the opposite end of "a maximum of generality," or extensiveness. Rather, our finest experience appeals to us. It is an intensive experience:

> If a [Beethoven] sonata like Opus 111 or a quartet like Opus 127 introduces us to what is most intimate and I would even say most sacred in our human condition, at the level where that condition transcends itself in a significance which is at once self-evident and beyond any possible formulation, at the same time it addresses itself only to a very restricted number of people, without for that reason at all losing its universal value.[92]

Such a universal is not individualistic. It is not available to the individual consciousness because it occurs on the level of "real communion" which is the level of those with a "reciprocal openness".[93] Neither can it be available to the masses as such: "The philosopher knows that the mass is a lie and it is against the mass and for the universal that

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[90] MAH, p.197.

[91] MAH, p.197.

[92] MAH, p.200.

[93] MAH, p.200. Mounier speaks of the "suprapersonal level" echoing Marcel, op.cit., p.113.

he must bear witness."[94]

F. Practical Search for Universality of Values

Possibly our return to a comparison of Sartre and Marcel will assist us to see universal values in concrete political terms. This we may briefly examine in terms of Sartre's flirtation with the Communist Party in France and Marcel's affair with the "rearmament movement" for morals.

Sartre and Marxism. Especially since World War II, Jean-Paul Sartre has flitted about the fringe of the Marxist movement. He actually fell out with Merleau-Ponty because he would not follow him into closer alignment with Marxism. On the other hand, it is only fair to record that Sartre openly opposed the armed suppression of the Hungarian people in 1956. Prior to this time it seemed that Sartre was trying to establish himself as something of a "humanist". It is difficult to know how to evaluate his relation to Karl Marx and his tradition. Hazel Barnes, Sartre's translator, sees The Critique of Dialectical Reason as an appropriate continuity piece with Being and Nothingness, if we allow for certain minor changes in detail. She claims that "we will have to allow that Sartre has fulfilled his promise--to show how the free individual . . . may commit himself meaningfully in the world."[95] Many commentators allow no such thing. Mary Warnock sees this later work of Sartre as a "radical conversion" from earlier positions. In the Critique, Warnock sees

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[94] MAH, p.205.

[95] Hazel E. Barnes' "Introduction" to Jean-Paul Sartre's Problem of Method, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen, 1963), p.ix.

"the spectacle of the death of Sartrean Existentialism."[96] Actually, Sartre himself admits that Marxism, not existentialism is now the philosophy of our time.[97]

But our purpose here is not to establish the continuity or discontinuity of Sartre's thought. What is significant for us is that Sartre's flirtation with Marxism must be seen as an "existentialist" in search of a "universal ethics". Though the Critique is largely sociological, it was Sartre's intention to follow Being and Nothingness with an "ethics".[98] Barnes says: "Sartre evidently believes that so long as we live in a society based on falsehood and inequity, any individual ethics is at best a compromise."[99] But in what way does Marxism enable Sartre to escape the purely individual.

Once again, ethical decision only appears necessary where two or more people are involved. In his opus magnum, Sartre made it plain that the only conceivable universal ethics would be established "coincidentally" by the simultaneous choice of a particular ethical end. (Usually in Being and Nothingness the other appears as the obstacle to the fulfillment of my intention.) But even this simultaneous universal could only survive the fixation of the moment and would soon fall apart under our objectifying stares. How to escape this dilemma?

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[96] Warnock, op.cit., p.98.

[97] The Problem of Method, op.cit., p.30.

[98] Sartre closed his volume with a few words about the "ethical implications" of the work, which plainly left much to be said, Being and Nothingness, op.cit., pp.625ff.

[99] "Introduction," The Problem of Method, op.cit., p.xxv.

In the Critique, Sartre explains his proposal. He speaks of the "collective". When we join others in a bus queue we form a collective, which is a "seriality" of people occupied with the same intention of catching a bus but all motivated by different reasons. But the collective may become a "group". A group, for example, was the Parisians on 14th July, 1789, when they realised their "genuine self-conscious community of ends, a real reciprocity". The other became an "alter ego". The movement from collective to group is dialectical and a necessity of history. This group is not "an organic entity with a life and a dynamic force of its own". Its reality is the "general individual". The other has helped me to achieve my own ends which are at the same time his.

But this cooperation is always in danger of relapse. How do I prevent this? It is by the taking of an "oath". This oath "imposes an artificial necessity". It is artificial because it is not "founded on a common humanity, it itself is the beginning of humanity." But this artificiality need not prevent the achievement of the common intention. It is the oath which enables the group to become an institution and thereby to perpetuate the common cause.[100]

We may examine this search for universality in two brief ways in contrast to Marcel's work: First, what kind of freedom does this make possible? It really allows for no planning at all. One can only react in "herd" fashion to the inevitable. This is caused by the fact that the problem of freedom remains unsolved. What is our freedom to choose an ethical goal? "We are free to turn ourselves into tools or

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[100] These last two paragraphs are based on Warnock, op.cit., pp.170-172.

instruments of the forces of history."[101] Sartre claims that freedom will come later, after Marxism itself has had its day.[102] But Warnock's criticism appears sound:

> The contradiction between freedom and necessity which make ethics impossible in Being and Nothingness has not really been solved. For a new necessity has taken the place of the old.[103]

Second, what kind of values are exalted according to this neo-existentialism? Sartre himself has been critical of many of the practices of contemporary Marxism. This has meant that his attachment to French Communism has always been rather loose. "Strictly speaking," says David Caute, "Sartre was not, even at the height of his rapproachement with the Party, a fellow-traveler."[104] Thus, his values have not always been those of the Party. But it remains apparent that the values he espouses are those which Marcel relates to "having" rather than "being". Even the common goal is worthwhile only because it happens to fit my personal ambitions. There is no participation here, only side-by-sideness. This is not a disvalue in itself, except as it is, according to Marcel, a denial of the finest light which human experience affords. It is the judgement of this writer that, given the distance which Sartre has maintained between himself and Communist practice, he has often espoused higher values in terms of "being" than his Marxist doctrine would indicate.

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[101] Ibid., p.172.

[102] The Problem of Method, op.cit., p.34.

[103] Warnock, op.cit., p.180.

[104] Communism and French Intellectuals, 1914-1960 (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964), p.253.

Marcel and M.R.A. Marcel too has sought to find a practical vehicle to express his belief in the universability of moral values. This expression has been through tentative support of the Moral Re-Armament Movement. This interest began when, after some persuasion, Marcel met with the "Oxford Group" in 1933. In Marcel's growing interest in "secondary reflection" and "intersubjectivity" he saw certain resemblances in the "quiet time" and the "personal encounter" which seemed common to Moral Re-Armament practice. In 1933-1934 Marcel and his wife entertained meetings of the Movement in his "small flat" on the rue de Tournon, Paris. He had a prior recognition that the four standards, "absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love," were "rather naive". To this was added Marcel's experience that the meetings overemphasized the "personal element" and lacked sufficient "critical reflection" in the attempt to be 'positive'. It was not until November, 1959, that Marcel again, took Moral Re-Armament with deep seriousness. Since that time he has remained supporter of Moral Re-Armament, though remaining a nonmember on account of "certain reservations".[105]

In terms of the moral values which Marcel believes Moral Re-Armament encourages, there is a distinct continuity between that position and his philosophy. In all the following points Marcel holds that Moral Re-Armament moves in the same direction: First, moral values must be understood to be absolute. We have called this "thoroughly conditioned". If

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[105]The material in English concerning Marcel's relation to Moral Re-Armament may be found in the "Introduction" to Fresh Hope for the World, op.cit., pp.1-5, and in J.P. Thornton Duesbery's, The Open Secret of MRA (London: Blandford Press, 1964), in an appendix which Marcel writes, pp.139-142.

a value is rooted in being then it cannot by its very nature be purely relative to time and place. Second, Marcel insists that these values are known only in a situation and in community. This situation and community are not just the "occasion" of coming together for common purposes but is the place of meeting where people actually share of themselves with another. Third, the values espoused should be those which are interrelated with other values. Fourth, these values are based on a mutual recognition of a transcendence toward which these values point. In these respects, at least, Marcel sees a unity with his thought and Moral Re-Armament.

Both Sartre and Marcel have experienced the exigency to move "from the personal to the world-wide". This, inner need in both philosophers we can fully respect. But we must harbour deep reservations about the vehicles with which they have chosen to associate themselves. One point, however, must be clear: The final judgement made upon Sartre and Marcel as ethicists must not be made on the basis of whether or not one approves of Marxism or Moral Re-Armament. In fact, the detachment which both philosophers retain from these respective movements indicates a reserve which can not simply be laid at the door of intellectual quietism.

Marcel observed in the 1940's that "existentialism" had come to a "parting of the ways". It must, he said, "either deny or transcend itself. It denies itself quite simply when it falls to the level of infra-dialectical materialism. It transcends itself, or tends to transcend itself, when it opens itself out to the experience of the supra-human."[106]

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[106] PE, pp.64-65.

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